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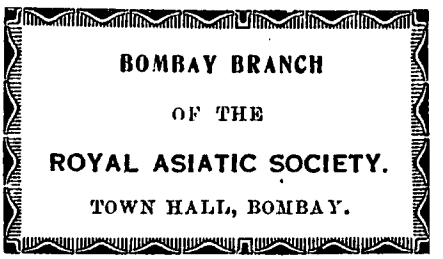

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A HISTORY

OF THE

THIRTY YEARS' PEACE.

A.D. 1816–1846.

By HARRIET MARTINEAU.

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THIRTY YEARS' PEACE.

VOL. I.

EUROPE

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PRELIMINARY NOTICE.

THE HISTORY OF THE PEACE was one of the literary projects of MR. CHARLES KNIGHT. It was based on the idea that, to many persons, particularly young persons entering upon the world, there was no period of English history at once so important, and about which it was so difficult to obtain information, as the immediately past age. The First Book, excepting the portion on the Spanish American Colonies, was MR. KNIGHT'S composition. Being unable to complete the Work with his own pen, he transferred it to MISS HARRIET MARTINEAU, whom he justly conceived to be well fitted for the task by her knowledge of political and social science, and her extensive acquaintance amongst the public men of her era. The result, it is scarcely necessary to say, fully justified MR. KNIGHT'S expectations, for certainly no such luminous memoir of the Thirty Years' Peace is likely to be written by any contemporary. It is proper, on account of the many references to time in the book, to add that the Author's stand-point was in the years 1846, 1847, and 1848.

In 1858 Miss Martineau gave the work a final revision. She then made a number of corrections, and substituted the Eighth Chapter of the First Book for the portion on the South American Colonies above referred to.

This is a reprint of that revised edition with the correction of some obvious errors.

alone did this treaty of the 20th November apply. The settlement of Europe, as it was called, had been effected by the general treaty signed in congress at Vienna, on the 9th of June 1815. Nothing remained but to carry out the great principles of justice and truth which were to heal the wounds of a bleeding world. Who could doubt that the reign of violence was destroyed for ever, when the Emperor Alexander of Russia proclaimed that henceforth the political relations of the powers of Europe were to be founded on the gospel of peace and love? In a manifesto from St. Petersburg, dated 'on the day of the birth of our Saviour, 25th December 1815,' the emperor commanded that there should be read in all the churches a 'convention concluded at Paris on the 26th of September 1815, between the Emperor of Russia, the Emperor of Austria, and the King of Prussia;' in which 'they solemnly declare that the present act has no other object than to publish in the face of the whole world their fixed resolution, both in the administration of their respective states, and in their political relations with every other government, to take for their sole guide the precepts of the holy religion of our Saviour—namely, the precepts of justice, Christian charity, and peace; which, far from being applicable only to private concerns, must have an immediate influence on the councils of princes, and guide all their steps, as being the only means of consolidating human institutions, and remedying their imperfections.'

> All crimes shall cease, and ancient frauds shall fail,
> Returning Justice lift aloft her scale,
> Peace o'er the world her olive wand extend,
> And white-robed Innocence from heaven descend.—Pope.

The declaration of 'the Holy Alliance'—for so this convention of the 26th of September was named—was a rhodomontade which the Emperor Alexander amused himself by composing, with the assistance of a 'white-robed Innocence' called Madame Krudener,* whilst the prosaic destinies of Europe were being settled amidst a

* 'Clothed always in white, kneeling in the oratories, she seemed one of the Druidesses whose wonderful words commanded the elements.' —*Capefigue, Restauration.*

conflict of jarring interests. The mystical doctrines of political perfectibility had few disciples, although the enthusiastic emperor laboured unremittingly for converts. Metternich slily laughed, and handed it to his master to sign; Wellington coldly bowed, and said that the English parliament would require something more precise. The peace of Europe was settled, as every former peace had been settled, upon a struggle for what the respective powers thought most conducive to their own aggrandisement. We shall endeavour briefly to trace some of the circumstances of the final settlement of 1815. Time has revealed many of the hidden movements by which that settlement was accomplished.

The 'Treaty of Union, Concert, and Subsidy,' of the 1st March 1814, known as the Treaty of Chaumont, was concluded between Great Britain, Austria, Russia, and Prussia, whilst the contest with France still remained undecided. The four great powers were negotiating for peace with Bonaparte, whilst war was raging all around them. The Treaty of Chaumont declared that the four powers had 'transmitted to the French government proposals for concluding a general peace;' and 'should France refuse the conditions therein contained,' that the object of this solemn engagement was 'to draw closer the ties which unite them for the vigorous prosecution of a war undertaken for the salutary purpose of putting an end to the miseries of Europe, *by re-establishing a just balance of power.* But this treaty was not limited to the attainment of peace alone—it contemplated a long alliance for the preservation of what should be attained and established. Its second object was, 'should the Almighty bless their pacific intentions, to fix the means of maintaining, against every attempt, the order of things which shall have been the happy consequence of their efforts.' To this end the four powers each agreed to keep in the field a hundred and fifty thousand effective men; Great Britain engaged to furnish a subsidy of five millions sterling for the service of the year 1814; and the duration of the treaty was to extend to twenty years. Within one month from the date of this treaty, the counter-revolution of France was effected, and Napoleon was decreed to have forfeited the

throne. On the 23rd of April, a convention was agreed with the restored government for the suspension of hostilities; of which the second article left no doubt that the just balance of power was to be established by reducing France to the territorial limits of the 1st January 1792. By the definitive treaty of peace of the 30th May 1814, some additions were made to these limits. With reference to the final disposal of the ceded territories acquired by France during the war, the treaty was necessarily vague. The larger questions of contemplated aggrandisement by Russia and Prussia were wholly left out of view: all was to be settled in the general congress to be held at Vienna.

The Congress of Vienna was not only the most important assembly that modern Europe had beheld, but it was, at the same time, the most imposing and ostentatious. It was accompanied by all the 'fierce vanities' of the last days of feudalism; and the great dramatic poet's description of the splendours of 'the vale of Andren' might, with little alteration, be applied to the saloons of Vienna in the latter months of 1814. In that city of pleasure were assembled, in October, the sovereigns of Austria, and Russia, and Prussia, with many of the lesser princes of the Germanic states. Emperors shook hands in the public streets; Metternich and Castlereagh strolled about arm in arm. The royal negotiators vied with each other in the splendour of their entertainments; the British minister, a commoner of England, o'er-topped the magnificence of the proudest royalties. The old Prince de Ligne exclaimed: 'Le congrès danse, et ne marche pas.' They did not move on quite so easily and agreeably as their outward delights and courtesies might seem to indicate. Talleyrand came with his profound adroitness to demand that France should take a part in all the deliberations. The parties to the Treaty of Chaumont would have narrowed his claims, but he persevered, and France regained her proper rank in European diplomacy. The ministers of England and Austria had begun to feel that ambitions might arise as adverse to the just balance of power as the humbled ambition of France itself. A voice had gone forth from the British parliament to protest against the annexation

of Saxony to Prussia, and the total subjugation of Poland by Russia. The chancellor of the exchequer declared on the 28th November, in the House of Commons, that he did not believe that any British minister would be a party to these acts. It was clear, from his own letters, that up to the end of October the British minister had been a consenting party to the annexation of Saxony; and that he had defended the annexation upon the ground that the king had been guilty of perpetual tergiversations, and ought to be sacrificed to the future tranquillity of Europe. Of the wishes and interests of the people of Saxony he made no mention. Austria, on the other hand, strongly protested against the annexation. For three months Europe was on the brink of a new war. France, having recovered a position of independence at the congress, demanded the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty to the throne of Sicily and Naples, and refused to consent to the degradation of the King of Saxony. The principle of legitimacy was violated, according to Talleyrand, by both these acts. Austria made common cause with France in the discussions upon Saxony. Opposed to these powers were the sovereigns of Russia and Prussia, united by personal friendship, and most potential in their military organisation. 'Secure me Saxony,' said Prussia, 'and you shall have Poland;' 'Secure me Poland,' said Russia, 'and you shall have Saxony.' In these questions Great Britain had no direct interest; but she had the great national interest to uphold, that the weaker states should not be absorbed by the stronger, and that some regard to the people should be shown in those partitions of territory which the wars of a quarter of a century had rendered too familiar. There was a change in the policy of the British minister at congress. Before the end of 1814, England, France, and Austria were united in demanding the integrity of Saxony, and the independence of Poland. On the 11th of December, the Archduke Constantine, who had hurried from Vienna, called upon the Poles to rally round the protection of the Emperor of Russia; the Prussian minister declared that Saxony was conquered by Prussia, and should not be restored; Alexander, in revenge for the opposition of France, was resolved to support Murat on the throne of

Naples. The rival powers began to look to war. There had been a million of allied men in arms to resist the aggressions of France, and to restore the just equilibrium of power in Europe. That these arms were now to be turned against each other was a more than possible event; it was an event to be instantly provided for and regulated by those whose mission was that of peace. In the treaty of Holy Alliance the rulers of Austria, Russia, and Prussia had solemnly engaged to 'remain united by the bonds of a true and indissoluble fraternity; and considering each other as fellow-countrymen, they will, on all occasions, and in all places, lend each other aid and assistance.' In a secret treaty concluded between Austria, England, and France on the 3rd Febuary 1815, an engagement was entered into to act in concert, each with an army of a hundred and fifty thousand men, to carry into effect the Treaty of Paris, in the manner most conformable to the spirit of that treaty; 'convinced that the powers who had to complete the dispositions of the Treaty of Paris ought to be maintained in a state of security and perfect independence, and holding it necessary, *in consequence of pretensions recently manifested*, to look to the means to resist every aggression.' When, a year after the date of this treaty, Mr. Brougham moved in the House of Commons for a copy of the document, Lord Castlereagh resisted its production, on the ground that it might be considered in the nature of an unfinished transaction, 'a mere historical fact,' that could have no influence on our actual affairs. He contended that the cordial co-operation of the allies in the events of 1815 was sufficient to show that for all great purposes the spirit of strict alliance pervaded the powers of Europe. Thirty years have passed since this argument was employed. It was a good argument then, to prevent inconvenient disclosures; but there requires little to convince us now, upon the clear evidence of this 'historical fact,' that if Bonaparte had not leaped into the throne of the Tuileries in the spring of 1815, the peace of Europe might have been broken before it was consolidated. The 'historical fact' is not without its lessons even at the present hour. On the 7th of March, Prince Metternich received a despatch announcing the hasty and mysterious

departure of Napoleon from Elba. On the 13th the solemn declaration of congress was published, that Bonaparte was to be put down as the common enemy of mankind. The Congress of Vienna continued its deliberations; and whilst preparations for war were made on every side, the general treaty of congress for the settlement of Europe was prepared, and was signed only a week before the battle of Quatre Bras. The points of difference as to territorial limits were settled by mutual concessions. The principle of partition and readjustment of territory was established.

The definitive treaty of the Congress of Vienna was signed on the 9th of June. On the 14th the chancellor of the exchequer went down to the House of Commons, and said that he had contracted a loan that day for thirty-six millions, and he asked for a total amount for the supplies of the year—in addition to the permanent charges of thirty-seven millions and a half—of no less a sum than ninety millions. The resolutions of the chancellor of the exchequer were agreed to, with only one opposing speech, and without a division. On the 18th the battle of Waterloo was fought. On the 3rd of July, Paris was in the occupation of the Anglo-Prussian army—Louis XVIII. was restored—Napoleon was banished to St. Helena.

It is not within our province to trace the various political intrigues that followed the restoration of the Bourbons to the throne from which they had been hurled, partly by their own indiscretions, essentially by the reaction of that fierce military spirit which had held Europe in terror for a quarter of a century. There was once more to be a contest for power between England and Russia. England could repress the national hatred of Prussia, and preserve Paris from worse than useless outrage. She could even read France 'a great moral lesson' in the restoration of the works of art to their lawful owners. But England could not preserve the influence which would have secured France from the dangerous revenge of the ultra-royalists. Talleyrand, who had raised his country to the position which she occupied at the Congress of Vienna, was driven from the councils of that king who, a few months before, was a powerless outcast. Russia, it is

said, named his successor. The ministers of England did all that remained to them to do. The treaty of alliance, which accompanied the Treaty of Paris, was forwarded to the French minister with a note which contained sundry excellent lessons on the duty of uniting moderation with firmness, and rejecting imprudent or impassioned counsels. 'Indemnities for the past' were to be secured by France paying, by gradual instalments, seven hundred millions of francs—a sum not equal to the loan which the English chancellor of the exchequer raised in one day; 'guarantees for the future' were exacted by the presence of the army of occupation for a term of years, supported at the expense of France, and garrisoning her strong places, under the command of the Duke of Wellington. England, having lost her real influence in the government of France, retained the power of making herself odious. The terms granted to the French were in truth moderate. England, at the height of glory, had to pay penalties of longer duration, perhaps of greater severity, as the price of this tremendous conflict. The last three years of war alone had cost the country one hundred and ninety-seven millions.

Paris in the autumn of 1815 presented a scene even more remarkable than the Vienna of the preceding year. The conquered city was one universal theatre of gaiety and excitement. Here was no 'Rachel weeping for her children.' In some dark *estaminet* might a solitary soldier of the disbanded army of the Loire be heard execrating the presence of the foreigner. But the foreigner preserved an exact discipline. He paid for everything, and he had ample means of payment. 'It is from this year, 1815, that the greater part of the shopkeeping fortunes of Paris are to be dated. The haughty nobles of Russia lavished their rents upon Parisian mistresses and gamblers. Hundreds of the great English families rushed to Paris to gaze upon the conquering armies, and to contend for the honour of a smile from Lady Castlereagh in her evening circle, or a bow from the great duke at his morning levee. All this was to end. The ministers and serf-lords of Russia had to return to a St. Petersburg winter, and see how best they could persuade the Poles

that their annexation was the triumph of their independence. The cautious diplomatists of Austria had to discover how the hot Italian spirits that had dreamt of liberty and national greatness were to sit down under the leaden sceptre of the German stranger. Prussian councillors of state had to meet the excited landwehr, who had rushed to arms under the promise of constitutional liberty; and to accommodate the differences of one set of subjects with the old German laws, and her new Rhine people with the French code. The smaller German states had to re-arrange themselves under the confederation. Sweden had to reconcile Norway. Holland had to amalgamate with Belgium—Protestant with Catholic, and interpret Dutch laws to a French race. Spain, which had put down the cortes, had to try if proscriptions could satisfy a people that had been fighting seven years in the name of freedom. Certainly these home prospects were not so agreeable to the managers of national affairs as the reviews of the Bois de Boulogne, or the réunions of the Faubourg St. Honoré. Perhaps to the English ministers, and to their admiring followers, there was less of apprehension than to the leaders of those states who had gained something more solid than the glory with which England remained contented. It was enough for her to believe that she had won security. She had proudly won the semblance of it; the one great enemy was overthrown. Still there might be some feeling—half fear, half disgust—at the thought of the House of Commons, with its searching questions, its hatred of continental alliances, its denunciations of broken promises, coming from a small but active minority. The lofty port and the cold politeness that befitted the table of Congress would be there out of place. Two years of negotiation in the midst of victory would not be favourable to debating equanimity. Hard everyday business would have to be talked of instead of glory. There was but one course:

> They must either—
> For so run the conditions—leave those remnants
> Of fool, and feather, that they got in France,
> With all their honourable points of ignorance,
> And understand again like honest men,
> Or pack to their old playfellows.
>
> —SHAKSPEARE: *Henry VIII.*

But if the plenipotentiaries of this country might return home a little imbued with the temper of despotic cabinets—if they could be accused of having too strenuously asserted the principle of legitimacy—if they had appeared to have contended too much for the claims of kings, and too little for the rights of the people—in one respect they had done their duty, and truly upheld the moral supremacy of England. They had laboured strenuously, and they had laboured with tolerable success, for the abolition of the slave-trade. In the Treaty of Utrecht, England protected her commercial interests—despicable protection!—by stipulating for a monopoly of the slave-trade for thirty years. In the Treaty of Paris, England wrested from France an immediate abolition of the traffic, and a declaration from all the high contracting powers that they would concert, without loss of time, 'the most effectual measures for the entire and definitive abolition of a commerce so odious.' This was something to set off against the remarkable fact that Great Britain, who had made such enormous sacrifices for the deliverance of Europe, had not a single commercial treaty to exhibit as a compensation for her prodigal disbursements of loans and subsidies. During the most stringent period of Napoleon's anti-commercial decrees, her commerce went on increasing. The people of Europe *would* have her commodities, and no fiscal power could shut them out. The merchants and manufacturers of England might expect that when all the rulers of Europe were assembled to deliberate upon the future welfare of the great European family, there would be some relaxation of that almost universal system of high duties and prohibition which denied to the continental nations the advantages of free marts for the products of British industry. The days of neutrals, and licences, and armies of smugglers, were gone. Our diplomatists came home with no treaties putting their country 'upon the footing of the most favoured nations.' The merchants and manufacturers would not have welcomed them if they had come with any treaty that went upon the principle of buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest. Even the Treaty of Versailles, which Pitt negotiated with France in 1786, would have been offensive to the parliament of

England in 1816, for it was a treaty of mutual concession and liberality. Had Lord Castlereagh said to the House of Commons, 'I have made trade free,' he would have been hooted. The shipowners would have clamoured for their beloved navigation-laws. The landowners would have driven him from office had he admitted the corn of Poland and the wool of Saxony. The colonial merchants would have impeached him for letting in the timber of Norway. The manufacturers would have been in open insurrection at the faintest rustling of the silks of France. As it was, the peace of 1815 was constructed without the slightest effort to secure its perpetuity by something stronger than conventions and proctocols — by uniting mankind in a bond of common interests.

We request our readers to turn to the map of Europe, and to follow us in a few details which may save some after-trouble of reference and explanation.

Look, first, at the *kingdom* of France, as its limits were fixed in 1815, nearly the limits of 1790—the limits of the present hour. It is a noble territory, full of natural resources—a land that possesses all the elements of real prosperity—a country that must ever be one of the greatest powers of Europe—a military power, a naval power. The population of France, within the limits fixed by the peace, was in 1815 about thirty millions. But before the campaign of 1812, the *empire* of France embraced a population of more than fifty millions; the imperial domination extended over more than sixty millions. There were thirty-two millions of people, in 1815, to come under new laws and new governments.

The old provinces of the Low Countries severed from the empire, were raised up into the kingdom of the Netherlands under the House of Orange. The line which now separates Belgium and Holland was drawn after the revolution of 1830. In 1815 this was made a compact kingdom of five millions of inhabitants—an agricultural, a manufacturing, and a commercial kingdom, with noble colonies. The physical arrangement of such a state was admirable. But the moral overcame the material. The people would not amalgamate.

The Austrian Netherlands (Belgium), with all that

part of Germany which lies on the left bank of the Rhine, were added to the old territory of France in 1801. The Rhenish provinces were, in 1815, bestowed upon Prussia —a fertile territory, an industrious people. By the Peace of Tilsit, Prussia was stripped of nearly one-half of her dominions. The Congress of Vienna restored her to her full sovereignty. But the congress did more for this great member of the European confederacy. It gave Prussia one-half of Saxony. It gave her a slice of the Duchy of Warsaw, with a million of people. The map will show better than words what the peace of 1815 did for Prussia. It raised her from the depths of her humiliation after the battle of Jena, to take rank amongst the most important of European powers.

A territory larger than all Europe put together—a population forming one-fifth of the whole of Europe—this is indeed a mighty country, and one that would seem destined for universal monarchy. But the largest states are not always the strongest. Russia, by its ascendency at the Congress of Vienna, obtained the kingdom of Poland in undisputed sovereignty, with four million inhabitants. The Duchy of Warsaw was swept from the domination of France. The new kingdom had a constitution; but the old annexations of Poland to Russia were to continue under the absolute monarch. The fabric was too frail to endure.

Where vanished the French kingdom of Italy, with its six million inhabitants? Where all the lesser French incorporated states, Piedmont, Genoa, Tuscany, Lucca? The lord of the iron crown might indeed dream that the Mediterranean would become the French lake! Austria acquired the Lombardo-Veneto kingdom, with its four millions of inhabitants. Sardinia annexed Genoa to its territory, and became a more important state. The States of the Church were re-established. Naples and Sicily were restored to the old Bourbon branch. Tuscany was again a grand-duchy. Smaller states are dotted about the famed Italian land. Visions of ancient grandeur have sometimes precipitated its people into revolt; but the arrangements of 1815 have not been disturbed. Austria obtained as great a prize in the dismemberment of the French empire as Prussia and Russia. With a policy that

was undoubtedly the result of the most skilful calculation, she sought no very considerable enlargement of territory to the north. She became mistress of the Adriatic, and carried her frontier to the Alps.

It is scarcely necessary for us to follow the minute territorial arrangements of the minor German states. The Germanic Confederation will require to be noticed when we have to trace its internal workings. It was not the least of the achievements of the Congress of Vienna, that the contending interests of a host of petty princes were harmonized into some semblance of nationality. One Germany to be defended by the confederation of independent states, raised up a formidable barrier to external ambition, whether of France or of Russia.

The last important territorial decision which it may be necessary to point out, is that of the annexation of Norway to Sweden. This was in accordance with the Convention of Kiel, in 1814, between Denmark and Sweden.

We are now writing of the settlement of Europe exactly thirty years since the final act of that settlement, the Peace of Paris, of November 1815.* From that time there has been no general war in Europe. Spain has passed through revolution upon revolution; the South American colonies have acquired independence without strength; Italy has in vain striven against the rule of Austria and Sardinia; Poland has succumbed more entirely to the power of Russia; Greece has been raised into a kingdom; the younger branch of the House of Bourbon has obtained the throne of France, as was contemplated by some in 1815; Belgium has been severed from Holland. Yet with all these changes the five great powers have not drawn the sword from the scabbard to assault each other: this is not to be forgotten in estimating the value of the peace of 1815. Napoleon, at St. Helena, said to O'Meara: 'So silly a treaty as that made by your ministers for their own country was never known before. You give up everything and gain nothing.' We can now answer, that we gained everything when we gained thirty years of repose. We gained everything when, after twenty years of warfare

* The reader will please bear in mind, when dates are referred to, that this history was written in 1846.

upon the most extravagant scale, the spirit of the people conducted that warfare to a triumphant end. The gains of a great nation are not to be reckoned only by its territorial acquisitions, or its diplomatic influence. The war which England had waged, often single-handed, against a colossal tyranny, raised her to an eminence which amply compensated for the mistakes of her negotiators. It was something that they did not close the war in a huckstering spirit—that they did not squabble for this colony or that *entrepôt*. The fact of our greatness was not to be mistaken when we left to others the scramble for aggrandisement, content at last to be free to pursue our own course of consolidating our power by the arts of peace. There were years of exhaustion and discontent to follow those years of perilous conflict and final triumph. But security was won; we were safe from the giant aggressor. The people that had subdued Napoleon—for it was the act of the people—would do the work that remained to them.

The imperial parliament had continued prorogued from the 11th July, 1815, to the 1st February 1816. During this long and unusual interval of legislative business—for it had been the previous custom for parliament to meet early in November—the foreign policy of the administration had been carried out without the slightest control from the representatives of the people. Sir S. Romilly writes in his diary of the 1st February: 'There has been no period of our history in which more important events have passed, and upon which the counsels of parliament—if they be of any utility—were more to be required, than during this long prorogation.' It may be doubted if the counsels of parliament could have been 'of any utility' in deciding the great questions involved in the irresistible triumph of the allied armies. Romilly was himself at Paris in October 1815. He laments over the unpopularity of the English in compelling the removal of the works of art from the Louvre; he doubts whether a peace of long duration could arise out of the occupation of France by foreign troops; he sympathises with those who bitterly complain of the perfidy of the allied powers. Mr. Horner has similar views: the good fruits of the French Revolution were to be lost to France; the confederacy of courts

and the alliance of armies were to subject the French to the government of a family that they despise and detest: that the people are the property of certain royal families, was to be established as a maxim in the system of Europe; our army was degraded in being the main instrument of a warfare against freedom and civilisation. If parliament had been sitting in the autumn of 1815, and had these been the general opinions of the opposition as a body, the Bourbons might not have been supported by the English diplomatists in their restoration; and the English army might have been withdrawn from the occupation of France, after the object had been accomplished for which England had professed to arm—the overthrow of Napoleon. But parliament was not sitting in the autumn of 1815; and, what is more important, the opposition, as a body, did not hold these opinions. Two days before the meeting of parliament, Mr. Horner writes: 'I fear we are not likely to go on very harmoniously in opposition; there are such wide and irreconcilable differences of opinion between those who, on the one hand, will hear of nothing but a return to all that was undone by the French Revolution, and who, *in the present moment of success*, declare views of that sort which they never avowed to the same extent before—and those who, on the other hand, think that the French people have some right to make and mend their government for themselves. . . . . You may expect very soon to see a breach in the opposition; I think it cannot be averted much longer.' Mr. Ward (afterwards Lord Dudley) attributes to the opposition motives which could belong only to a few and which even in those few were mixed up with something higher: 'Opposition had staked everything upon Napoleon's success, and are grieved at his failure.' Had Napoleon succeeded, there might have been unity. He fell; and the great Whig party was broken for a season. It only recovered its power when it took deeper root in the popular affections. The triumph of the British arms was soon followed by grievous embarrassments at home. But the people, at the commencement of 1816, had little sympathy for those who were lamenting over the banishment of Napoleon. Even the chief Whig organ, the *Edinburgh Review*, complained

of 'the strange partiality which has lately indicated itself for him among some of those who profess to be lovers of liberty in this country;' and ridiculed 'the sort of hankering after him which we can trace among some of our good Whigs.' The people had as little respect for those who grieved that France had to pay severe penalties for her long career of spoliation. The success of England was too recent—the success was too splendid and overwhelming, not to throw its shield over just fears and reasonable complaints. It annihilated mere party hostility. The reaction was not yet come. The fever-fit of triumph had not yet been followed by the cold torpor of exhaustion. For a little while the nation could bear even the presumption of those who claimed all the merit of the triumph, and almost appeared to forget that never was a government so supported by the people as the English supported their government during the Hundred Days. Mr. Ward, a general follower of the administration, writes thus of the men in power in 1816: 'Their prodigious success—which, without at all meaning to deny their merits and abilities, must be allowed by all reasonable men to have been vastly beyond their merits and beyond their abilities—had made their underlings insolent, and the House too obedient.' Such was the position of the two parties with reference to external politics. Domestic concerns, which were soon to assume the greater importance, were too little regarded during the war to divide men into parties. The policy of peace had slowly to construct the great modern division of the adherents to things as they were, and the advocates of things as they should be—the enemies and the friends of progress.

Let us endeavour, with however feeble a pencil, to trace the outlines of those who had chiefly to interpret the opinions of their time—to attack and to defend—to propound lasting truths or fleeting paradoxes—in the parliament of 1816. The greater number of those who had to debate on the Peace of Paris sleep with those who had to debate on the Peace of Utrecht. The same narrow house that contained Oxford and Bolingbroke contains Liverpool and Castlereagh. Ponsonby and Tierney are as insensible to the historic regards of their younger contemporaries as

are Stanhope and Hanmer. The living and the dead alike claim an honest and impartial estimation.

On the woolsack sits John Scott, Lord Eldon. The chancellor is in his sixty-fifth year. He has filled his high office, with the exception of a single year of absence from power, since 1801. The consummate judge is in him united with the narrowest politician. The acute lawyer, balancing every question with the most inflexible honesty and the clearest vision, is the most one-sided and halting statesman that ever sat in the councils of an empire in which truth was only to be established by conflict, and every element of change was in ceaseless, and for the most part healthful activity. His thought by day, his dream by night, is to uphold what he calls the constitution—that indefinable compound of principles and expedients, that to him is as sacred as the commands of Holy Writ. Whoever approaches to lay his hands on that ark, whether he come to blot out a cruel statute, or to mitigate a commercial restriction, or to disfranchise a corrupt borough, or to break down a religious disability, is his enemy. He was the last great man who belonged to this sect. But he acted with perfect honesty and unshrinking courage in the assertion of these opinions. He retained office because he professed the opinions; but no one can believe that he professed the opinions to retain office. He lived in times when bursts of popular violence alarmed the peaceful, and licentious expressions of opinion disgusted the moderate; and he knew no other instrument but force for producing internal peace. Yet he was no hater of liberty, no assertor of the rights of unconditional power. The law, as it stood, was his palladium, yet no one was more ready to make the natural course of justice give place to suspensions of the constitution. But in his mind this was to preserve the constitution. To lop off a limb was life to the constitution; to infuse new blood was death. It has been truly observed that he confounded every abuse that surrounded the throne, or grew up within the precincts of the altar, with the institutions themselves—'alike the determined enemy of all who would either invade the institution or extirpate the abuse.' He is one that after-times will not venerate; but, fortunately for the fame of the larger number of the

great ones of the earth, there is a vast neutral ground between veneration and contempt.

The first lord of the treasury is the Earl of Liverpool. He has been prime minister from 1812; he has held high office from the beginning of the century; he has filled subordinate offices from the age of manhood. Respect is on all hands conceded to him—the respect due to honest intentions and moderate abilities. Admiration or disgust is reserved for his colleagues. As prime minister of England, he seems to fill something like the station which a quiet and prudent king may fill in other countries. He is the head of the nation's councils, with responsible ministers. The conduct of the war was not his; he suffered others to starve the war. The peace was not his; he gave to others the uncontrolled power of prescribing the laws of victory. The stupendous financial arrangements of the war were not his; they were expounded by a man of business in the House of Commons. The resistance to all change was not his; the great breakwater of the coming wave was his sturdy chancellor. The people, during his war-administration, had quietly surrendered itself to the belief that good business talents were the most essential to the official conduct of the affairs of nations. A long course of victory had succeeded to a long course of disaster; and, therefore, the rulers at home were the best of rulers. The great Captain who saved his country, and threw his protection over the government, offered the strongest evidence, in after-years, of how little that government had done for him. Around the premier sit the home secretary, Viscount Sidmouth, and the colonial secretary, the Earl Bathurst. They enjoy, even in a greater degree than himself, the privilege of not being envied and feared for the force of their characters, or the splendour of their talents.

It is not quite easy to understand now what constituted the opposition in 1816. The two peers of the greatest mark had been divided in their opinions as to the war against Napoleon on his return from Elba. It is little doubtful that they were equally divided as to the character of the peace. Earl Grey stood at the head of the party that denounced the intimate foreign alliances which this

country had formed in the support of legitimacy. He would have treated with Bonaparte. Lord Grenville held that the maintenance of peace with Bonaparte was impossible, and that consequently the foreign alliances and the restoration of the Bourbons were essential parts of the war policy. Both had been driven from office ten years before, through their firm adherence to the support of the Catholic claims. The nature of each of these eminent statesmen was somewhat haughty and uncompromising. Had they remained in power after the death of Mr. Fox, they would have probably differed as to the conduct of the war. Had they succeeded to power upon the termination of the war, they would as certainly have differed as to the character of popular discontents, and the mode of appeasing them. Lord Grey was a Whig-reformer —Lord Grenville a Whig-conservative. On the benches of opposition sat also the Marquis of Lansdowne and Lord Holland. Their differences of opinion were not of a very practical character. Lord Lansdowne saw in the overthrow of Napoleon the destruction of a military tyrant, and he rejoiced accordingly; Lord Holland, a man of large benevolence, had a generous tear for a fallen foe.

Turn we to the House of Commons—that assembly whose voice, even when its defects were most fiercely canvassed, went forth throughout the world as the expression of a great and free nation. The leader of the ministerial phalanx is Robert Stewart, Lord Castlereagh. To his splendid figure and commanding face he has added the outward show of honours which have not been bestowed upon a commoner since the days of Sir Robert Walpole. He is 'the noble lord in the blue ribbon.' He has been foreign secretary since 1812. He held high office in 1802. By the force of his character he bore down the calumnies which had attached to his connection with the government of Ireland before the union. The triumphs of the Peninsula had obliterated the recollections of Walcheren. He comes now to parliament at the very summit of his power, having taken but little part in its debates during the mighty events of the two previous years. There is a general impression that he has a leaning towards arbitrary principles, and that his intercourse with the irresponsible

rulers of the continent has not increased his aptitude for administering a representative government. He will be attacked with bitterness; he will be suspected, perhaps unjustly. But he will stand up against all attack with unflinching courage, and unyielding self-support. No consciousness of the narrowness of his intellect and the defects of his education will prevent him pouring out torrent after torrent of unformed sentences and disjointed argument. It is a singular consideration that mere hardihood and insensibility should have stood up so successfully against untiring eloquence within the walls of parliament, and determined hostility without. Lord Castlereagh even succeeded in living down popular hatred. Round this most fortunate minister of 1816 are grouped his colleagues—Nicholas Vansittart, the chancellor of the exchequer, 'the noblest work of God,' according to Pope's maxim; the secretary of war, Lord Palmerston; the chief secretary for Ireland, Mr. Peel; and, somewhat out of his place, the friend whom Canning raised to office when he ingloriously went to Lisbon in 1814—Mr. Huskisson.

The accredited leader of the opposition is George Ponsonby, formerly chancellor of Ireland. He is a prudent and temperate leader, not remarkable for great powers as a debater, but a safe guide for party-men to rally round. One who did not act with him says: 'He was the least eminent man that ever filled such a station.' One who did act with him writes in his diary: 'He was a very honest man, had many excellent qualities, and possessed very considerable talents; but he was by no means fit for the situation which he has for ten years occupied—that of leader of the party of opposition.' Beside him sits George Tierney, a parliamentary veteran, who has been fighting for twenty years, chiefly in the ranks of opposition, once as a member of the Addington administration—a financier, a wit. Of ready powers as a debater, of great practical sense, of unblemished private character, he seemed fitted for higher eminence than he attained in the nation's eyes. He was a parliamentary man of business at a time when that high quality was not valued as it ought to have been; and, whether in or out of

office, the best committee man, the clearest calculator, was held as a very subordinate person in affairs of legislation. He redeemed, however, the character of the opposition in regard to this quality, in which they were held, unjustly enough, to be singularly deficient; and he almost succeeded in persuading his hearers and the public, that genius and industry may be united. The nation seemed then to have confidence in its administration, because it regarded its chiefs and subordinates as essentially men of business. Mr. Tierney was to claim this confidence as the man of business of the opposition. He had declaimers enough about him to make the attribute not too infectious. Mr. Tierney was the man of financial detail. There was one who then chiefly dedicated himself to the neglected walk of political economy. Francis Horner had won a high reputation by the unremitting assertion of large principles which indolence and prejudice had shrunk from examining. More than any man he had gone to the root of financial difficulties. His opinions were to be adopted when he lived not to expound them—others were to carry them into practice. It is something to be an earnest thinker in an age of debaters. His are labours that have more endurance than mere party eminence. In the same ranks are a few other labourers 'for all time.'

On the bench of honour sits one whose lofty port and composed features show him to be a man of no common aspirations. His habitual expression is earnest, solemn, almost severe. He has a great mission to fulfil, far above party politics and temporary contentions. Yet he is a partisan, but not in the ordinary sense of the word. He is sometimes bitter, prejudiced, perhaps vindictive—yet no one more deeply feels than himself that this is not the temper for the attainment of great social improvements. His hopes are not sanguine. He sees little of amelioration in the present aspect of affairs; he fancies that evil principles are in the ascendant. He has nearly reached his sixtieth year; he has been in Parliament only ten years. But during that short period he has left an impression upon that assembly never to be obliterated. That lawyer, the acknowledged head of his own class, who in the House of Commons has won the highest

reputation for sincerity of purpose, for vast ability, for the eloquence of a statesman as distinguished from that of an advocate, never rises without commanding the respect of a body not favourable to the claims of orators by profession. His forensic duties are vast, his devotion to them too absorbing, the whole character of his mind too staid—perhaps too little imaginative and pliant—to make him the leader of his own scattered party. But as the founder of the noblest of our improvements, the reform of our hateful and inoperative penal laws, he will do what the most accomplished and versatile debater would have left undone. He will persevere, as he has persevered, amidst neglect, calumny, the frowns of power, the indifference of the people. The testament which he bequeaths will become sacred and triumphant. That man is Sir Samuel Romilly.

The place which Whitbread filled is vacant. A sudden, mysterious, and most melancholy death had silenced that fearless tongue, which, as it was the last to denounce the war of 1815, would have been the first to tear in pieces the treaties which that war had consummated. The miserable and oppressed listened to him as their friend and deliverer. His political enemies acknowledged his inflexible honesty. His love of justice made him generous even to those whom he habitually opposed. He had been for several years the true leader of the opposition, and he had led them with right English courage. Others might win by stratagem; he was for the direct onslaught. He perished the day after Paris capitulated. Two nights before, he had spoken in the House of Commons. His health had been long broken. He was desponding without a cause. Insanity came, and then the end. A French writer has had the vulgar audacity to say that Whitbread destroyed himself because he could not bear the triumph of his country at Waterloo. The same writer affirms that Canning betrayed to Fouché the plans of Castlereagh for the expedition to Walcheren. Both falsehoods may sleep together. No two men more dearly loved their country, whatever they might think of its policy. The place of Whitbread is vacant. He that comes to earn the succession to the same real leadership is not an unknown man

—he is the Henry Brougham who, having appeared at the bar of the House of Commons, in 1808, as counsel for the great body of merchants and manufacturers against the orders in council, carried the repeal of those impolitic orders in 1812, after seven weeks of the most laborious and incessant exertion, almost unexampled in the records of parliament. For three years, the place which he had won by a combination of industry and talent almost unprecedented had been surrendered to other tribunes of the people. The moment in which he reappears is somewhat unfavourable to the highest exertions of his powers, for he has no worthy opponent. George Canning is not in his place in parliament. He, who had sighed for peace, as Pitt sighed in the gloomy days of Austerlitz and Jena, was out of office during the triumphs of Leipsic and Vittoria. The peace of 1814 was accomplished without his aid. He had bowed before the humbler talents of his rival colleague, whom military successes abroad had raised up into a disproportioned eminence at home. Time has shown how Canning was hated and feared by a large number of those who professed a common allegiance with himself to the principles of the son of Chatham. The hate and the fear applied as much to his principles as to his talents. The government of 1814 had secured his allegiance, and drawn the sting of his dreaded adherence to Liberal policies. They disarmed him; they had well-nigh degraded him. They opened the session of 1816 in the confidence that they could do without him. 'They wondered what use he could be of, and why Lord Liverpool could have thought of making any terms with him.' On the 10th June, Canning took his place in the House of Commons as president of the Board of Control. The ten years which followed look like the last days of parliamentary eloquence. What is left may work as well; but at any rate it is something different.

The cross-benches of neutrality in the House of Commons are not over full. The party of Canning has been scattered. But there sit a knot of men who hold the scales in one of the greatest questions—perhaps the most interesting question—that was ever agitated within the walls of parliament. It is the party of the abolitionists

of the slave-trade. Victory abroad is to them defeat, if it bring not the consummation of their hopes in the acts of foreign governments. At the peace of 1814, France—the restored government of France—restored by our money and our arms—refused to consent to the immediate abolition. Bonaparte, amidst his memorable acts of the Hundred Days, abolished the hateful traffic, by a stroke of his pen—and it was abolished. The Bourbon government a second time restored, dared no longer refuse this one demand of Great Britain. Had they refused, the British minister could scarcely have met the parliament. He is now come to say that France has decreed that there shall be an end to this sin and shame. Other nations have promised. But—is it to be told that where we might have commanded, there alone is resistance? Spain and Portugal still maintain the traffic. The firm band of abolitionists are secure that their silver-tongued leader—he who resigned every meaner ambition to give freedom to the oppressed—will persevere through good report and evil report, with or without friends in power, till the chains of the negro are broken for ever. They fear not enemies, they truckle not for friends; they have a support above what the world can give. This 'band of brothers'—reviled or honoured, proselytising or solitary—will hold their ground. They are the only united body of enthusiasts in an age of political calculation. They will manifest, as they have manifested, what enthusiasm may accomplish.

CHAPTER II.

Speech—Property-Tax—Civil List—Marriage of the Princess Charlotte.

THE House of Commons of 1816 presented a remarkable spectacle. The ministry met the representatives of the people with all the pride and confidence of a triumph beyond hope. The ministerial leader came flushed from his labours of restoration and partition, and took his seat amidst shouts such as saluted Cæsar when he went up to the Capitol. The march to Paris, twice over, says a conspicuous actor in the politics of that hour, was sufficiently marvellous; 'but it appeared, if possible, still more incredible, that we should witness Lord Castlereagh entering the House of Commons, and resuming, amidst universal shouts of applause, the seat which he had quitted for a season to attend as a chief actor in the arrangement of continental territory.' The opposition, considered numerically, were a broken and feeble body; but, intellectually and morally, their strength was far more formidable in this the fourth session of the parliament than at any previous period of its duration. In opposing the enormous war expenditure from 1812—in resisting the determination to make no peace with Napoleon—they had not with them the national sympathy. The tables were turned. They had now to contend against the evident partiality for continental alliances—the enormous standing army—the excessive peace-expenditure—the desire to perpetuate war-taxes. They were supported by public opinion, for the once accredited indivisibility of peace and plenty appeared to be wholly at an end. The people were suffering, and the excitement of the struggle against the domination of France having passed away, they were not disposed to suffer in silence.

The speech from the throne, delivered by commissioners, was necessarily a speech of congratulation. Splendid

successes, intimate union, precautionary measures, these were the key-notes to our foreign policy; manufactures, commerce, and revenue were, somewhat rashly, declared to be flourishing at home; economy was hinted at—economy consistent with the security of the country, 'and with that station which we occupy in Europe.' In the House of Lords there was no amendment to the address. In the Commons a bootless amendment, which was seconded by Lord John Russell,* declared the country to be suffering under 'unexampled domestic embarrassments,' and demanded 'a careful revisal of our civil and military establishments, according to the principles of the most rigid economy.' The chancellor of the exchequer on this occasion declared his intention to continue the property or income tax on the modified scale of five per cent. This avowal was the signal for one of the chief battle-cries which were to lead on the scanty powers of opposition. Party hostility was not disarmed by the deportment of the foreign minister. Mr. Brougham having denounced Ferdinand of Spain as 'a contemptible tyrant,' Lord Castlereagh thereupon deprecated 'that scrutinising criticism of the internal policy of foreign countries, which could only be properly exercised at home.' The lecture was not forgotten.

The treaties with foreign powers were presented to parliament on the first day of the session. The formal debate upon them was deferred for a fortnight. Mr. Brougham had previously brought forward a motion for the production of a copy of the treaty between Russia, Austria, and Prussia, of the 26th September 1815—the treaty of Holy Alliance. Lord Castlereagh had declared, when notice of Mr. Brougham's motion was given, with reference to this extraordinary document, that 'its object was confined solely to the contracting parties, and breathed the pure spirit of the Christian religion.' The motion was of course rejected. It was not till a later period of our history that it was shown that there was cause for alarm, 'when sovereigns spoke of leading armies to protect religion, peace, and justice.' Mr. Brougham also

* Lord John Russell was in parliament in 1814.

moved for a copy of a treaty said to have been concluded at Vienna in January 1815. Lord Castlereagh admitted the existence of such a treaty, and that this country had been a party to it; but he refused to produce it, affirming that it was a mere matter of history. 'Yes,' said Mr. Tierney; 'and like other matter of history, it was necessary that it should be known, because the knowledge of it bore on other times.' It appears to have been considered in the House of Commons that this alliance was directed solely against Russia. The 'historical fact' has become clearer: the contracting powers, thus prepared for the last resort, had not a common danger once more united them, were Austria, France, and England, against Russia and Prussia. The motion for the production of this treaty was also rejected.

Before the great discussion upon the general treaties took place, the government declared its intention with regard to the peace establishment. There was to be an army of a hundred and fifty thousand men, maintained at an expense of little short of thirty millions; and the secretary for foreign affairs justified this course by the example of the large military establishments of the other nations of Europe. It was on a debate in the committee of supply that Lord Castlereagh used the memorable expression which roused a spirit in the country of deep hostility, almost of disgust; 'He felt assured that the people of England would not, from an ignorant impatience to be relieved from the pressure of taxation, put everything to hazard, when everything might be accomplished by continued constancy and firmness.' From the moment of this offensive declaration, the income-tax was doomed. The people had not borne the taxation of so many years of war with a heroism such as no people had ever before shown, to be taunted with ignorant impatience of taxation, now that they had won peace. The presumption of the government at this period was calculated to produce a violent reaction throughout the land. In parliament it produced alarms which now look exaggerated, but which men of unquestioned integrity most certainly entertained. The minor questions of continental arrangements were less regarded, and wisely so, than the peculiarities of our

internal position. Men really thought that the old English spirit of freedom was about to be trampled upon. Lord Grenville, who on the first night of the session had given his heartiest assent to the address, rejoicing in the mode by which the peace had been accomplished—the restoration of the Bourbons—now caused the Lords to be summoned; and on the 14th February, in moving for the estimates for the military service for the year, delivered a speech that spoke something of the spirit of 'the good old cause.' He said: 'The question which their lordships had now to consider was, whether, after a struggle of twenty-five years, maintained by such immense efforts, and at such vast expense, they were at length to obtain the blessings of that real peace for which they had so long contended, or whether their situation was to be exactly the reverse? Whether they were still to be charged with an immense military establishment; whether they were now to be called upon to take their rank among the military states of the continent; whether they were to abandon the wise maxims and policy of their forefathers, by which the country had risen to such a height, and had been enabled to make such great exertions, and, at an humble distance, turn servile imitators of those systems which had been the cause of so much distress and calamity to the nations by which they had been adopted and maintained?' The prime minister, in replying to Lord Grenville, called these 'extraordinary and unreasonable fears.' But they were re-echoed on many sides. When the great debates on the treaties at length took place, in which the Earl of Liverpool moved the address, Lord Grenville proposed an amendment which deprecated in the strongest language 'the settled system to raise the country into a military power.' The House divided, the government having a majority of sixty-four. Lord Holland protested against the address, in terms which embodied his speech upon the treaties, and expressed the opinions of that section of the opposition: 'Because the treaties and engagements contain a direct guarantee of the present government of France against the people of that country; and in my judgment imply a general and perpetual guarantee of all European governments against

the governed.' In the House of Commons the foreign secretary moved the address upon the treaties. An amendment was proposed by Lord Milton, which deprecated the military occupation of France, and the unexampled military establishments of this country. The debate lasted two nights, the address being finally carried by a majority of a hundred and sixty-three. Romilly, in his diary, had noted down the heads of his own speech: 'As I consider this as the most important occasion that I ever spoke on, I have been desirous of preserving the memory of some of the things I have said.' The importance of the occasion could not have been over-estimated. But what was said on both sides was, to a considerable extent, the regular display of party conflict. The exultations of the government at the settlement of their war labours look now scarcely more inflated than the fears of some members of the opposition that the confederated arms of the despots of Europe might be turned against the liberties of England. The practical business that was at hand—the enforcement of economy, the alleviation of distress—was the matter of real importance that was to grow out of these debates. There can be no doubt, however, that there was a strong and sincere belief amongst many good men that the liberties of this country were in eventual peril. Horner, in the debate on the treaties, made a very powerful speech; and a week after, he thus writes in the confidence of private friendship: 'We are nearly declared to be a military power. If this design is not checked, of which I have slender hopes, or does not break down by favour of accidents, we shall have a transient glory for some little while. The bravery of our men, the virtues which the long enjoyment of liberty will leave long after it is gone, and the financial exertions of which we are still capable, will insure us that distinction; but it is a glory in which our freedom will be lost, and which cannot maintain itself when the vigour, born of that freedom, is spent.' Visionary as we may now regard these opinions to be, the expression of them had its use. When Horner rejoiced that he had 'his breath out about the Bourbons and Castlereagh,' he, in common with other eminent men of his party, did something to repress

the spirit which success had produced in high places. The ultra-Whigs, when they groaned over the captivity of Napoleon—when they shut their eyes to much that had been really high-minded in the conduct of the allies towards France—when they saw only danger in the future, overlooking the mighty peril from which we had escaped—had not the country with them. They had not the support of the great bulk of the intelligent population, who, except on special occasions, are not party politicians. But when they addressed themselves, not as partisans, but as earnest representatives of the people, to reduce the public burthens, and to repress a career of wasteful expenditure, they were on safer ground.

The corporation of London took the lead in the national expression of opinion against the property-tax. Their petition complained of the violation of the solemn faith of parliament; of the injustice, vexation, and oppression of this tax—of the partiality of taxing, in the same proportion, incomes of a short duration, and those arising from fixed and permanent property; they acknowledged the depressed state of the agricultural interests, but they contended that the manufacturing and trading interests were equally depressed, and equally borne down with the weight of taxation; they finally called for reduction in the public expenditure, and the abolition of all unnecessary places, pensions, and sinecures. It was not alone the anti-ministerial party of the city that joined in the petition; the judgments of mercantile men against the continuance of the tax were almost universal. The dislike of the rural population was as fixed as that of the inhabitants of towns. The battle against this tax was one of the most remarkable examples of parliamentary strategy that was ever displayed; and the history of the struggle has been most pithily told by the leading tactician: 'On the termination of the war, the government were determined, instead of repealing the whole income-tax, which the act enforcing it declared to be "for and during the continuance of the war, and no longer," to retain one-half of it—that is, to reduce it from ten to five per cent.—and thus keep a revenue raised from this source of between seven and eight millions, instead of

fifteen. As soon as this intention was announced, several meetings were held, and two or three petitions were presented. The ministers perceived the risk they ran, if the policy should be pursued, of continued discussion for a length of time; and they saw the vast importance of despatch. Accordingly, the chancellor of the exchequer gave notice on the Tuesday for his motion on the Thursday immediately following. The opposition took the alarm, and Mr. Brougham declared, on presenting a petition, numerously signed, from one of the London parishes, that if the hurry now indicated should be persevered in, he should avail himself of all the means of delay afforded by the forms of the House. Lord Folkestone, one of the most strenuous, and in those days one of the most active and powerful supporters of the popular cause, vigorously seconded this menace, in which he entirely joined. On the next day, more petitions were flung in, more discussions took place, and the government postponed for a week the introduction of the bill. That week proved quite decisive; for so many meetings were held, and so many petitions sent up, that the bill was put off from time to time, and did not finally make its appearance till the 17th of March. Above six weeks were almost entirely spent by the House of Commons in receiving the numberless petitions poured in from all quarters against the tax. For it was speedily seen that the campaign of 1812* was renewed, and that the same leaders, Messrs. Brougham and Baring, had the management of the operations.

'At first, the ministers pursued the course of obstinate silence. The opposition debated each petition in vain; every minister and ministerial member held his peace. No arguments, no facts, no sarcasms, no taunts could rouse them; no expression of the feelings of the country, no reference to the anxiety of particular constituencies, could draw a word from the ministers and their supporters. At length it was perceived that their antagonists did not the less debate, and that consequently the scheme had failed in its purpose of stifling discussion. The only effect of it then was, that all the debating was on one side, and this

* The resistance to the orders in council.—K.

both became hurtful to the government in the House, and more hurtful still in the country. They were forced into discussion therefore; and then began a scene of unexampled interest, which lasted until the second reading of the bill. Each night, at a little after four, commenced the series of debates, which lasted until past midnight. These were of infinite variety. Arguments urged by different speakers; instances of oppression and hardship recounted; anecdotes of local suffering and personal inconvenience; accounts of the remarkable passages at different meetings; personal altercations interspersed with more general matter—all filled up the measure of the night's bill of fare; and all were so blended and so variegated, that no one ever perceived any hour thus spent to pass tediously away. Those not immediately concerned—peers, or persons belonging to neither House—flocked to the spectacle which each day presented. The interest excited out of doors kept pace with that of the spectators; and those who carried on these active operations showed a vigour and constancy of purpose, an unwearied readiness for the combat, which astonished while it animated all beholders. It is recounted of this remarkable struggle, that one night towards the latter end of the period in question, when, at a late hour, the House having been in debate from four o'clock, one speaker had resumed his seat, the whole members sitting upon one entire bench rose at once and addressed the chair—a testimony of unabated spirit and unquenchable animation, which drew forth the loudest cheers from all sides of the House.

'At length came the 17th of March, the day appointed for the division; but it was soon found that this had been, with the debate, wholly anticipated. The usual number of petitions, and even more, were poured thickly in during some hours; little or no debating took place upon them; unusual anxiety for the result of such long-continued labour, and such lengthened excitement, kept all silent and in suspense; when, about eleven o'clock, Sir William Curtis, representing the city of London, proceeded up the House, bearing in his arms the petition, which he presented without any remark, of the great meeting of the bankers and merchants, holden in

the Egyptian Hall, and signed by twelve thousand persons.* The division took place after a debate that did not last half an hour; no one could indeed be heard in an assembly so impatient for the decision; and by a majority of thirty-seven voices the tax was defeated for ever, and the wholesome principle, as Mr. Wilberforce well observed, was laid down, that war and income-tax are wedded together.'

The ministers did not expect this defeat. They had calculated on a majority of forty. The opposition expected to lose by twenty. It was not a *party* triumph. The national feeling was irresistible. Even members of the Tory party assisted at and rejoiced in the issue. Mr. Ward writes from Paris: 'It was amusing enough to see the effect the defeat of our ministry upon the question of the income-tax produced upon the minds of the people here. Most of them thought that the government would be changed, and that the Whigs would come in, and probably let loose Napoleon to disturb the world for the third time. If I had been in the House, I should have voted in the minority, and yet, I confess, I am not sorry it was a minority. Not that I am by any means convinced that the income-tax ought to have been repealed, but because I think the ministry wanted beating upon something, no great matter what.' Mr. Ward rejoiced because he sighed for the return of his friend Canning to office. But the people exulted in the abolition of the property-tax upon no such narrow ground. They were suffering; and they saw no more effectual way to relieve their sufferings, than to remove the means of prodigal expenditure. There can be no doubt that the landed interest, of whatever party, were amongst the principal instruments in removing this burthen from the land, which they declared could then pay no rent. Whether the decision was a permanently wise one, may now be doubted. It was salutary at the time, for it dispelled the belief that resistance to taxation

* This is a mistake. Sir William Curtis spoke with great emphasis: "He was present in the House when the tax was first proposed, and he heard Mr. Pitt declare that it should be a war-tax only, and should positively cease on the restoration of peace. The division did not take place till the 18th.—K.

was 'ignorant impatience.' The chancellor of the exchequer took a somewhat remarkable course after this defeat. He voluntarily abandoned the war-duties upon malt—amounting to about 2,700,000. The decision of the House would compel him to resort to the money-market—in other words, to raise a loan: 'It was of little consequence that the loan should be increased by the amount of the calculated produce of the malt-duty.' Lord Castlereagh said it was 'a matter of indifference whether they took a loan of six or eight millions.' This was the 'indifference'—the result of a long course of unbounded expense—that required all the efforts of the people and of their friends, during many years, to change into responsibility. No minister could now dare to speak of its being a matter of indifference whether he added two millions to the public debt. When we look at this temper of the government, we may excuse the bursts of indignation which were sometimes directed in parliament, even against the highest executive authority. It cannot be denied that, in a time of very general distress, the prince-regent indulged in a career of unbounded extravagance. An indecent contempt of public opinion—a perseverance in the indulgence of sensual appetites and frivolous tastes—had made him, 'in all but name a king,' deservedly unpopular. The unhappy circumstances of his domestic position were in themselves enough to estrange from him much of the respect of the people. To counteract the evil influences of his past life, his conduct ought to have been at least decorous, when he was called to the possession of supreme power; for he had few public virtues to compensate for the offensiveness of his private example. His duties to the state—the mere routine of the kingly office—were invariably performed with tardiness and reluctance. Without any strength of character but that which proceeded from his irresistible craving for ease and indulgence, his best qualities were distorted into effeminate vices. The constitutional bravery of his house forsook him, and he became a moral coward, whom his official servants had to govern as a petted child. Bred up amongst Whig friends and flatterers, he at once professed respect for the democratic parts of the constitution, with

an instinctive hatred of public opinion. The feebleness of his intellect, the debasing character of his passions, made him miserable in the unequal contest between his sense of duty and his desires. He was subdued into the perfect Sybarite, and his people despised him. Men everywhere spoke out; and it was not surprising that the public voice was echoed in the House of Commons. When opinions there found vent, there was abundant sympathy out of doors to satisfy one daring orator for the coldness of his party. Sir S. Romilly writes on the 20th March: 'A motion of disapprobation of the increase which has lately been made of the salary of secretary to the admiralty in time of peace, from £3000 to £4000 a year, was rejected by a majority of 29; there being for the motion 130, and against it 159. In the course of the debate upon it, Brougham, who supported the motion, made a violent attack upon the regent, whom he described as devoted, in the recesses of his palace, to the most vicious pleasures, and callous to the distresses and sufferings of others, in terms which would not have been too strong to have described the latter days of Tiberius. Several persons who would have voted for the motion were so disgusted that they went away without voting; and more, who wished for some tolerable pretext for not voting against ministers, and who on this occasion could not vote with them, availed themselves of this excuse, and went away too; and it is generally believed that, but for this speech of Brougham's, the ministers would have been again in a minority. If this had happened, many persons believe, or profess to believe, that the ministers would have been turned out. Poor Brougham is loaded with the reproaches of his friends; and many of them who are most impatient to get into office, look upon him as the only cause that they are still destined to labour on in an unprofitable opposition. I have no doubt that, whatever had been the division, the ministers would still have continued in office. But it is not the less true that Brougham's speech was very injudicious as well as very unjust; for, with all the prince's faults, and they are great enough, it is absurd to speak of him as if he were one of the most sensual and unfeeling tyrants that ever disgraced a throne.'

It does not appear in the imperfect reports of the parliamentary debates, that the prince-regent was spoken of as strongly as Romilly represents. The language of Mr. Brougham was indeed described by Mr. Wellesley Pole to be 'such language as he had never listened to in that House before'—'such expressions as in his life he had never before heard any man utter who attempted to call himself a friend to the House of Brunswick.' And yet Sir Robert Heron had, on the 12th of February previous, spoken in almost as unmeasured terms of 'royal extravagance;' and there was 'laughter' in that House when he thus described the aspect of the court: 'You have assumed a most imposing situation; your armies have expelled one despot and set up another; you have a prince who has so much dignity, that he expends as great a sum on a thatched cottage as another monarch would on a palace; so dignified is he, so magnificent are his ideas, that he cannot endure to see the same furniture in his house for two successive years; he is such a friend to trade, that he cannot give less than eight hundred guineas for a clock; and such a protector is he of the arts, that he pays six thousand pounds for a Chinese cabinet.' And then Sir Robert Heron talked of 'the principal causes of the French Revolution.' Again, on the 4th March, Mr. Methuen, who a month before had seconded the ministerial address, said, that 'had he the good-fortune to be one of the constitutional advisers of the crown, he would go boldly forward and say—You must keep your faith with the people, by abstaining from an extravagance which inexperience cannot palliate, and which poverty cannot justify.' The plain speaking of Mr. Brougham was not, therefore, without precedent. But, however the Whig party may have felt themselves compromised, however the Tory party might have denounced any allusion to the personal character of him who exercised the sovereign attributes, we are not sure that the public interests were not truly served by one who fearlessly pointed out those 'who, in utter disregard of the feelings of an oppressed and insulted nation, proceeded from one wasteful expenditure to another; who decorated and crowded their houses with the splendid results of their extravagance; who associated

with the most profligate of human beings; who, when the gaols were filled with wretches, could not suspend for a moment their thoughtless amusements, to end the sad suspense between life and death.' * We may now, without any violation of 'the duty and the loyalty we owe,' think it as fitting that public opinion should penetrate a palace, through the solemnly uttered censure of representatives of the people, as that the voice of praise only should reach the ears of princes. When the mightiest of the earth proclaim aloud that they live for their own pleasures alone, it is time that under a free government there should be some authoritative demonstration to avert the contagion of the sensualist's example, if not to pale his cheek with words almost as fearful as those which suspended the revelry in the halls of Belshazzar. From the House of Commons the voice of the people might go forth without the dread of *ex-officio* informations—the common shield of power in the days of the regency. 'Twopenny Post-bags' might make the mob of idle readers of all parties laugh at 'Fum and Hum,' and 'The Marchesa,' and 'The Royal Dandy;' but there are seasons when the people should be made thoughtful, and this was especially one of those seasons. The danger of fostering discontent was small, when compared with the danger of suffering those who ought to live for example, to believe that they were wholly above the control of opinion. The damage to the expectants of office, on this particular occasion, may be laid aside, with many similar conventionalities, as a matter in which the nation is now, as it was then, wholly uninterested.

In the session of 1815 the excess upon the civil list—that is, the amount spent in the support of the royal state and establishments, beyond the sum set aside by parliament—was no less than £350,000. In 1816 it was

* This subject was debated on the 18th of March, two nights before Mr. Brougham's offensive speech, when it appeared that there were fifty-eight persons under sentence of death in Newgate, many of whom had been convicted at the December sessions. 'The difficulty and inconvenience of assembling the law-officers at Brighton,' and 'the indisposition of the prince-regent'—his royal highness was suffering from gout—were the reasons assigned for this neglect.

mentioned that there was a present debt of £277,000 upon the civil list, but that this arrear would be provided for out of the droits of the crown. The annual grant to the crown, instead of the old 'hereditary revenue,' was £800,000. Out of this sum were to be paid the salaries of the judges of the realm, the expenses of foreign ministers and consuls, the salaries of certain high officers of state, besides other matters that did not pertain to the personal expenses of royalty. The average expenditure of seven years up to 1811 had been £1,103,000. In 1815 it was £1,480,000, having rapidly increased since 1811. The necessity for two royal establishments—that of the afflicted king at Windsor, and that of the regent—involved some additional expense; but there was a source of expense far beyond ministerial estimates and parliamentary resolutions. A bill was brought in by the ministry for the better regulation of the civil list; and during its progress much anxious discussion took place. It appeared that the droits of the crown, and of the admiralty, were constantly applied in aid of the civil list, and that parliament was still called upon to provide a large arrear. It was contended that parliament ought to take the appropriation of these convenient funds into its own hands, so that the nation should be cognizant of the amount that went in aid of the civil-list revenue. The ministerial bill for the regulation of this expenditure, which was undoubtedly a step in reform, was carried. In the House of Lords a motion of Earl Grosvenor, 'that a committee be appointed to consider what places and offices may be abolished, consistent with the public safety,' was negatived by a large majority.

The debates upon the army estimates, which eventually caused some reduction—the rejection of the property-tax—the searching inquiry into the civil list—the agitation of the question of sinecure offices—were indications of the feeling which any government would have to encounter that did not resolutely determine that a season of peace should be a season of economy. Upon these points the tone of public opinion was decided. It was not a factious, it was not a disloyal tone. The nation could discriminate between grants for worthy and grants for disreputable

objects. When the details of the civil list exhibited items of wanton and ridiculous luxury, the members of the administration themselves were pained and humiliated. When the same ministers proposed the magnificent establishment for the Princess Charlotte and Prince Leopold, upon their marriage, not a dissentient voice was heard in parliament; the nation was unanimous in the wish to be liberal almost to profusion. For why? The nation saw in this marriage of the presumptive heiress of the crown—a marriage of affection—some assured hope that public duties might be fitly learned in the serenity of domestic happiness. The private virtues were felt to be the best preparation for the possession of sovereign power. The idea of a patriot queen discharging all her high functions with steady alacrity, confident in the affections of her people, of simple habits, of refined and intellectual tastes, her throne sanctified by the attributes of womanly affection—such hopes were something to console the nation for the present endurance of authority that claimed only 'mouth-honour,' without love or respect. The marriage of the Princess Charlotte was hailed as a public blessing. It took place at Carlton House, on the evening of the 2nd of May. There was perfect unanimity in the House of Commons as to the vote for the establishment of the royal pair: £60,000 a year was the large sum determined on, with an income of £50,000 a year to the Prince of Saxe-Coburg, should his serene highness survive the Princess Charlotte. The most ample testimony was given in both Houses to the excellent character of the prince who was thus united to the presumptive heiress of the British crown.

CHAPTER III.

Agriculture—Manufactures and Commerce—Depression of Industry—Currency.

When the government, in the name of the prince-regent, informed parliament that 'the manufactures, commerce, and revenue of the United Kingdom were in a flourishing condition,' the exception of agriculture was a sufficient announcement that the cry of 'distress' was near at hand.

The history of 'agricultural distress' is the history of agricultural abundance. Whenever Providence, through the blessing of genial seasons, fills the nation's stores with plenteousness, then, and then only, has the cry of ruin to the cultivator been proclaimed as the one great evil for legislation to redress. It was ever so. Pepys, in his diary of January 1667-8 writes: 'Here they did talk much of the present cheapness of corn, even to a miracle; so as their farmers can pay no rent, but do fling up their lands.' There had been a cycle of scarcity from 1658 to 1664, during which seven years the average price of wheat was about 57*s.* a quarter. There was a cycle of plenty from 1665 to 1671, during which seven years the average price of wheat was about 36*s.* per quarter. The obvious remedy for this excess in the disposable produce of one country, was to export the corn to other countries which had not been equally impoverished by abundance. Pepys, a shrewd man of business, saw the remedy: Farmers can pay no rent, but do fling up their lands, and would pay in corn; but our gentry are grown so ignorant in everything of good husbandry, that they know not how to bestow this corn; which, did they understand but a little trade, they would be able to join together and know what markets there are abroad, and send it thither, and thereby ease their tenants, and be able to pay themselves. But the natural law of commercial intercourse—the law by which the bounty of the All-giver would be distributed

amongst his universal family, so as to compensate for the inequalities of soil and climate—this law was despised as long ago as the time of Charles II. by the conventional law-makers, who were 'grown so ignorant in everything of good husbandry,' and did not understand even a 'little trade.' To remedy the evil of cheapness, they made the famous corn-law of 1670, which imposed duties on the importation of grain, amounting to prohibition. The restrictions upon exportation were removed; wheat might be exported upon the payment of a shilling per quarter customs-duty. But importation was not to be free till the price of wheat had reached 80*s.* per quarter. When it was at 53*s.* 4*d.*, a duty of 16*s.* was to be paid; when above that price and under the mysterious compensation price of 80*s.*, a duty of 8*s.* was to be paid. The more famous corn-law of 1815 was but a copy of the corn-law of 1670. Amidst the best and the worst species of opposition—the power of argument and the weakness of tumult—a bill was in 1815 hurried through parliament, which absolutely closed the ports till the price of wheat rose to 80*s.* After the passing of the corn-law of 1670 there was as much 'agricultural distress' as before, till dearth came to the relief of the suffering cultivator. Farms were thrown up, rents were reduced. In 1673, in spite of the prohibitory laws against importation, and the unlimited freedom of exportation, wheat was as low as 35*s.* In 1674 there came the landlord's blessing of a bad harvest, and the price of wheat rose to 64*s.* The cycle of scarcity had come round. It was precisely the same after the corn-law of 1815. It was passed during a season of wonderful abundance. It produced the immediate good to the landed interest of preventing the abundant supply being increased by importation; but the effect which it produced to the nation was to dry up the resources in years of scarcity which the foresight of other countries might have provided. The war-and-famine price of 1812 was again reached in the latter part of 1816, in 1817, and 1818. The golden days of the deity that is found in no mythology—the anti-Ceres—were returned. But the people were starving. Misery and insurrection filled the land.

It may be convenient at this place if we refer to the changes which were produced by the corn-law of 1815, and briefly exhibit the arguments by which it was maintained or opposed.

In 1814, the report of a select committee of the House of Commons presented in 1813—of which committee Sir Henry Parnell was chairman—was adopted as the basis of certain resolutions then debated. The first of the resolutions declared, 'that it is expedient that the exportation of corn, grain, meal, malt, and flour, from any part of the United Kingdom, should be permitted at all times, without the payment of any duty, and without receiving any bounty whatever.' This resolution was carried in the same year, and passed into law. With regard to the importation of corn, it was proposed, in resolutions laid upon the table in 1813, that till wheat should be 105*s.* 2*d.* a quarter, and other grain in the same proportion, the importation should be subject to a prohibitory duty. This proposed sum was, in 1814, reduced to 84*s.*, when wheat might be admitted upon payment of 2*s.* 6*d.* In 1791 the nominal-duty price was fixed at 54*s.*; in 1804, at 66*s.* In offering objections of detail to these resolutions, Mr. Rose, a member of the government, 'took it for granted that no one now entertains the remotest idea of an entirely free trade in corn.' The reasoning of those who call themselves advocates of free-trade fully justified his belief. Sir Henry Parnell 'had always avowed himself the friend of a free trade. . . . If the corn and commodities of this country were on a level with those of the rest of Europe, he should then think it unnecessary to introduce an artificial system. But the price of corn in England had risen higher than in any other country in Europe, in consequence of the interruption of late years of our communication with the continent, and formed an exception to the general rule.' That is to say, as the war of a quarter of a century had prevented importation under ordinary circumstances, and consequently raised the price of the people's food to an inordinate height, it was necessary to perpetuate the war-system upon the return of peace. Mr. Huskisson, as might be expected, was somewhat more logical in his

advocacy of a high duty upon importation. He had proposed a sliding-scale, under which the free-importation price was 87*s.* and his argument was, that 'the whole of our commercial and economical system was a system of artificial expedients. If our other regulations with regard to the price of commodities stood upon the basis of the principles of free-trade, then there could be no possible objection to leaving our agricultural productions to find their own level. But, so long as our commerce and manufactures were encouraged and forced by protections, by bounties, and by restraints on importation from abroad, he saw no reason why the laws relating to the growth of corn should alone form an exception to this general system in almost all other respects.' On the other hand, those who represented the commercial interests were not sufficiently in advance of their time to deprecate the general system of protections and bounties for which they had so long clamoured; but they saw the natural resources of commerce that would be opened by a free trade in corn, and the evils of a restricted trade. Mr. Phillips said: 'If a free trade in grain were to be allowed, it would lead to an improvement of our general commerce. This increase of commerce would give rise to an increase of national wealth, and consequently an increase of population, which in the end would afford an additional encouragement to agriculture.' Mr. Baring (afterwards Lord Ashburton), in reply to the argument that the high duties on importation would make the price of bread steady, contended that 'steady prices were never produced by restriction. Apply the doctrine of restriction to any one county in England, and it would be found that the doing so would not have the effect of steadying the prices in that particular county: on the contrary, the bread would be alternately high and low, according as there was a good or bad harvest in that particular spot; deprived, as it would be, of intercourse with the rest of the kingdom. As the whole of England was to any particular county in England in this respect, such exactly was the whole of Europe as to England.'

The corn-bill of 1814 was opposed by very numerous petitions; and on this account, and also with reference to

the lateness of the session, the bill was thrown out. But in the spring of 1815 the measure was hurried through the House, in spite of the most earnest and solemn petitions of great bodies of the commercial and manufacturing interests throughout the country. The average price of wheat was under 60*s.* a quarter; if it rose to 66*s.*, the ports would be opened. The excitement was universal. The landlords and farmers were filled with terror, for the continental markets were open. The unreflecting multitudes of the capital and of some manufacturing districts were ready for violence. The political economists were divided in their opinions. The lowest point at which importation could take place was finally fixed at 80*s.*, by a large majority of both Houses, with little that could be called discussion. Argument was exhausted in 1814.

It was under the corn-law of 1815, a year after its hasty enactment, that the majority of the landed interest came to parliament to ask for the remission of peculiar burthens, and to demand fresh protection. They had learnt nothing from the solemn protest against that law which some of the most eminent and the most wealthy of the peers had inscribed in their journals. It was in vain that the greatest amongst landed proprietors—Buckingham, Carlisle, Devonshire, Spencer—the most eminent amongst statesmen—Grey, Grenville, Wellesley—had recorded these memorable words: 'We cannot persuade ourselves that this law will ever contribute to produce plenty, cheapness, or steadiness of price. So long as it operates at all, its effects must be the opposite of these. Monopoly is the parent of scarcity, of dearness, and of uncertainty. To cut off any of the sources of supply, can only tend to lessen its abundance; to close against ourselves the cheapest market for any commodity, must enhance the price at which we purchase it; and to confine the consumer of corn to the produce of his own country, is to refuse to ourselves the benefit of that provision which Providence itself has made for equalising to man the variations of season and of climate.' The landed interest of 1816 could not forsee that, within five years, the very House of Commons that had passed the corn-law of 1815,

would receive from one of its own committees a report, drawn up by an iconoclast minister of state, that should thus pull down the image of clay, which he himself had assisted them to set up: 'This system is certainly liable to sudden alterations, of which the effect may be at one time to reduce prices, already low, lower than they would probably have been under a state of free-trade, and at another unnecessarily to enhance prices already high; to aggravate the evils of scarcity, and to render more severe the depression of prices from abundance. On the one hand, it deceives the grower with the false hope of a monopoly, and by its occasional interruption may lead to consequences which deprive him of the benefits of that monopoly, when most wanted; on the other hand, it holds out to the country the prospect of an occasional free-trade, but so regulated and desultory as to baffle the calculations and unsettle the transactions both of the grower and of the dealer at home—to deprive the consumer of most of the benefits of such a trade, and to involve the merchant in more than the ordinary risks of mercantile speculation. It exposes the markets of the country either to be occasionally overwhelmed with an inundation of foreign corn, altogether disproportionate to its wants, or in the event of any considerable deficiency in our own harvest, it creates a sudden competition on the continent, by the effect of which the prices there are rapidly and unnecessarily raised against ourselves. But the inconvenient operation of the present corn-law, which appears to be less the consequence of the quantity of foreign grain brought into this country, upon an average of years, than of the manner in which that grain is introduced, is not confined to great fluctuations in price, and consequent embarrassment both to the grower and the consumer; for the occasional prohibition of import has also a direct tendency to contract the extent of our commercial dealings with other states, and to excite in the rulers of those states a spirit of permanent exclusion against the productions or manufactures of this country and its colonies. In this conflict of retaliatory exclusion, injurious to both, the two parties, however, are not upon an equal footing; on our part, prohibition must yield to the wants of the

people; on the other side, there is no such overruling necessity. And inasmuch as reciprocity of demand is the foundation of all means of payment, a large and sudden influx of corn might, under these circumstances, excite a temporary derangement of the course of exchange, the effects of which, after the resumption of cash-payments, might lead to a drain of specie from the Bank, the consequent contraction of its circulation, a panic among the country banks—all aggravating the distress of a public dearth, as has been experienced at former periods of scarcity.'

This was at once judgment and prophecy. But the landed interest of 1816 had but one remedy for every evil —unequal remission of taxation conjoined with protection. They desired themselves to pay less to the state than their fellow-subjects; they required the state to limit their fellow-subjects to that exclusive market for the necessaries of life which should dry up the sources of profitable industry, and thus make their taxation doubly burthensome. On the 7th March, Mr. Western laid upon the table of the House a series of fourteen resolutions, which declared the 'unexampled distress' of those whose capitals are employed in agriculture; the danger of the continuance of such distress; the insufficient demand for the produce of agriculture, so as to cover the heavy charges and burthens upon it, and the necessity for reducing those burthens—taxes, tithes, and poor-rates. The resolutions then demanded the repeal of so much of the act of 1815 as should allow foreign corn to be warehoused, so that only British corn should be stored; and urged an advance of money by the government to such individuals as might be inclined to buy up our native produce. The principle upon which all this was advocated was a sufficiently broad one; 'That excessive taxation renders it necessary to give protection to all articles the produce of our own soil, against similar articles the growth of foreign countries, not subject to the same burthens;' and 'that it is therefore expedient to impose additional duties and restrictions on the importation of all articles the produce of foreign agriculture.' It is a remarkable example of the power of the landed interest in the House of Commons, that these

assertions and unconditional demands were received, not only with tolerance, but respect. The dayspring of economical politics had scarcely yet dawned. Amongst the representatives of the people, Mr. Huskisson was all sympathy with the mover of these resolutions, 'whom he would venture to call his honourable friend.' Mr. Brougham, although opposed to bounties upon exportation, and the exclusion of foreign corn from our warehouses, spoke approvingly of the corn-law of 1815 as 'politic, at the least as a palliative, or as affording the means of carrying the country through difficulties, the greatest pressure of which we may hope will only prove temporary.' This temper, even amidst men not essentially supporters of class interests, will not be wondered at when we consider the preponderating power of landed property in the House of Commons at that time. The strength either of the ministry or the opposition essentially depended upon the numerical force of the country gentlemen. The commercial and manufacturing interests were most imperfectly represented. The landed aristocracy had retained official power, in association with a few 'clerkly' workers, from the earliest feudal times. The admission of a merchant to the councils of the sovereign would have been deemed pollution. The mill-owners had carried us through the war; yet as a political body they were without influence, almost without a voice. There was no one in the House of Commons who had either the courage or the ability to probe the wounds of the agricultural interests, which were thus paraded before the nation.

The distress of the agriculturists was thus stated, in 1816, in general terms, by Mr. Western: 'Between two and three years ago, agriculture was in a flourishing and prosperous state; and yet, within the short period which has since elapsed, thousands have been already ruined, and destitution seems to impend over the property of all those whose capital is engaged in the cultivation of the soil.' The causes assigned by him were excessive taxation, the reduction of the paper currency, tithes, poor-rates. 'Yet, in spite of all these burthens, up to the middle of 1813, agriculture did sustain them, and under the weight of

their united pressure continued to make most rapid advances.' But the chief cause, as most correctly stated by Mr. Western, was 'a redundant supply in the markets, a supply considerably beyond the demand, and that created chiefly by the produce of our own agriculture.' With equal correctness did the speaker add: 'It is perfectly well known that if there is a small deficiency of supply, the price will rise in a ratio far beyond any proportion of such deficiency; the effect, indeed, is almost incalculable; so likewise in a surplus of supply beyond demand, the price will fall in a ratio exceeding almost tenfold the amount of such surplus.' And yet, with this knowledge of general principles, the same speaker asserts that in the period when 'agriculture was in a flourishing and prosperous state,' the profits of agriculture were not large. Let us endeavour to elucidate his position, that 'if there is a small deficiency of supply, the price will rise in a ratio far beyond any proportion of such deficiency.' More than a century ago it had been computed that but one-tenth of the defect in the harvest may raise the price three-tenths, and two-tenths deficiency raise the price eight-tenths. This was the opinion of D'Avenant and Gregory King. Mr. Tooke, in quoting this passage, says: 'There is some ground for supposing that the estimate is not very wide of the truth, from observation of the repeated occurrence of the fact, that the price of corn in this country has risen from 100 to 200 per cent. and upwards, when the utmost computed deficiency of the crops has not been more than between one-sixth and one-third below an average, and when that deficiency has been relieved by foreign supplies.' Upon this principle we may estimate the value of Mr. Western's assertion that, during the flourishing years to which he refers, the profits of agriculture had not been large. If the produce of an acre of wheat in good years be thirty-three bushels, sold for 6*s.* a bushel, the amount realised would be £9 18*s.* If the produce in an unfavourable season were diminished one-sixth, and the price raised from 6*s.* to 12*s.*, the 27½ bushels would produce £16 10*s.* The difference is profit. At the commencement of the war, in 1793, the average price of wheat was 49*s.* 6*d.* a quarter; in 1794, it was 54*s.*; in 1795 and 1796, years of

scarcity, it was above 80*s.*; in 1797 and 1798, it fell again to the prices of 1794. The harvests of 1799 and 1800 were fearful visitations of scarcity. At Michaelmas 1799, the quarter of wheat sold for 92*s.*; and at Michaelmas 1800, for 128*s.* The winter of 1800-1 was the season of the greatest privation that had been experienced in this country since the days when famine was a common occurrence; before the harvest of 1801 the quarter of wheat had risen to 177*s.*, and the quartern loaf had reached the fearful price of 2*s.* within a halfpenny. From 1802 to 1807 were years of abundance; but the price of wheat never went down to that of the years preceding 1800. During these six years the lowest average price of any one year was 60*s.*; the average price of the six years was 75*s.* But the six years from 1808 to 1813 were years of deficient produce; the price of wheat during that period went up, according to the principle of Gregory King and of Mr. Western. The price before the harvest of 1808 was 74*s.* 6*d.* the quarter; at the same period in 1809, it was 100*s.*; in 1810, 120*s.*; in 1811, 104*s.*; in 1812, 136*s.*; in 1813, 136*s.* The average price of the six years, 108*s.*; an excess of 33*s.* above the average price of the six years from 1802 to 1807. In 1810 the foreign supply was very considerable: but for that supply scarcity would have become famine. In 1811 and 1812 there was a virtual exclusion of foreign supply. For four of these years of high prices out of the six, the agricultural interest had the exclusive advantage of the rise of price, far advanced above the degree of defect. That was the period, within the recollection of many of us, when every acre of land was eagerly bought up; when the enclosure of wastes went on to an excess that had very slight regard to the quality of the land enclosed; when the cultivation of wheat was forced to an extent that had no reference to the exhaustion of the soil, or the necessities of economical husbandry; when rents were raised twofold, and often threefold, above the rents of 1792; when the race of small careful farmers vanished from the earth, and gave place to a legion of the most luxurious and insolent of all the class of getters of sudden wealth; when the whole business of cultivation was an affair of grasping ignorance

—a scramble for excessive gains, in which the landowners eagerly participated; when the system of bread allowances in aid of wages was made the instrument of debasing the labourer into a predial slave, and the poor-rates heavy as they were, operated as a positive bounty to the agriculturists, by enabling them to feed their own labourers out of their own produce; thus raising, by improvident consumption, the price of bread on all the non-agricultural population, and leaving to the agricultural population no surplus for the minor necessaries of life. This was the period when, according to Mr. Western, 'agriculture was in a flourishing and prosperous state.' In 1814 there was the fear of peace and the fear of abundance, to come across the dreams that this state of things would last for ever. When the overpowering landed interest in 1814 and 1815 demanded a new corn-law of parliament, prices had fallen to the average of the years from 1802 to 1807. In 1816, when the cry of 'distress' was at its height—when it was proclaimed that the universal bankruptcy of the cultivators was at hand; that no rents could be paid; that the soil of England would go out of cultivation—no one in parliament uttered the undoubted truth, that the years of agricultural prosperity had been years of suffering and depression to all other classes of the community; that the reckless prodigality of the cultivators, and their false ambition to win a higher social position than their forefathers—not by their prudence and intelligence, but by their ostentation; that the lavish and unprofitable expenditure of farming capital, in connection with excessive rents had mainly led to the insolvencies and executions for debt, which were paraded as evidences of national decay; that the good soils unnaturally exhausted, and the poor soils unnaturally broken up, must go out of cultivation under a more healthy and less artificial system; that the exclusion of foreign supply had forced the growth of wheat, to the injury of truly productive cultivation; and that the boasted agricultural improvements were really little more than an extension of the surface under tillage, to the neglect of scientific husbandry, which the farmers of that day ridiculed, and the abandonment of the minor economies out of which their predecessors had made their chief

profits. The great crop of 1813, which left a surplus produce for two or three years, came as the natural corrective for this really evil condition of society. The remedy was a severe one, and we may commiserate the individual suffering of the transition state. We may even consider that the corn-law of 1815, as a merely temporary measure, did something not unproductive of general benefit to break the fall of the agricultural interests. But when, in a course of struggle after struggle, it was sought to perpetuate the principles of that law—the principles which formed the creed of the landowners of 1816—'that excessive taxation render it necessary to give protection to all articles the produce of our soil, against similar articles the growth of foreign countries'—it was time to consider what were the interests of a class, and what were the interests of a nation. That consideration came tardily upon the most enlightened and disinterested of the government and the legislature. But it did come; and it has constituted the great rallying-point of the commercial and manufacturing interests, whose power, whether of union, or wealth, or intelligence, has been growing year by year, and making proselytes slowly and surely with the progress of that general spread of knowledge, compared with which all mere party bonds are but ropes of sand.

The resolutions of Mr. Western in 1816 came to no practical result; for the chief reason, that the forced abandonment of the property-tax, and the voluntary relinquishment of the war malt-duty, had really left very little within the reach of government to be offered as a further boon to the landed interest. When they demanded that foreign corn should be no longer warehoused duty free, it was manifest that they utterly set at nought every possible precaution against a season of dearth. Their relief was to be attained at all hazards by the most absolute and unconditional monopoly. The bonded corn could not be let out of warehouse till the home price had reached 80*s.*; but that was not enough. When the hour of dearness should arrive, we were at once to scatter our emissaries over the face of the earth, to buy corn at any price, and by the sudden demand, to raise the foreign market to the level of the home market, so that the

'flourishing and prosperous period' of agriculture might be secured beyond all hazard of the interruption to be produced by commercial foresight. But this was not all. Rape-seed and linseed of the growth of foreign soils were to be prohibited; tallow, cheese, and butter were proposed to be shut out. The ministers smiled a negative upon the most presumptuous of these demands, 'afraid that we had already gone quite as far as policy would admit in our system of prohibitions, if not indeed too far; and we should be particularly cautious how we advanced still further into the system.' The legislative exhibition of the wisdom that shouted for unconditional protection may be summed up in one short and emphatic speech: 'The strength, the virtue, and the happiness of the people mainly depended on the prosperity of the agriculture of the country; and on this principle *the country should be forced to feed its own population.* No partial advantage to be derived from commerce could compensate for any deficiency in this respect. The true principle of national prosperity was an absolute prohibition of the importation of foreign agricultural produce, except in extreme cases.'

'Manufactures and commerce,' said the speech of the prince-regent, 'are in a flourishing condition.' This was to rely upon the bare figures of custom-house returns. In 1815 the declared value of British and Irish produce and manufactures exported was fifty-one millions, being six millions more than in 1814. Well might the commerce of the country seem to be flourishing. Those who knew the real workings of that commerce were not so deceived. Mr. Baring, on the second night of the session, declared that 'he saw more loss than gain in this great increase of export.' When the destruction of the power of Napoleon in 1814 had opened the ports of the continent to our vessels—when the consumption of our exports no longer depended upon a vast system of contraband trade—it was universally thought that there could be no limit to the demand for British manufactures and colonial produce. If, under the anti-commercial decrees of our great enemy, the shipments to European ports had been twelve millions in 1811, why should they not be doubled in 1814? And accordingly they were doubled. The most extravagant

profits were expected to be realised. The ordinary course of trade was forsaken, and small capitalists as well as large, at the outports as well as in London, eagerly bought up colonial produce, and looked for golden returns. 'The shippers found to their cost, when it was too late, that the effective demand on the continent for colonial produce and British manufactures had been greatly overrated; for whatever might be the desire of the foreign consumers to possess articles so long out of their reach, they were limited in their means of purchase; and accordingly, the bulk of the commodities exported brought very inadequate returns.' Mr. Brougham in 1816 correctly described the result of these expectations: 'The bubble soon burst, like its predecessors of the South Sea, the Mississippi, and Buenos Ayres. English goods were selling for much less in Holland and the north of Europe, than in London and Manchester; in most places they were lying a dead-weight without any sale at all: and either no returns whatever were received, or pounds came back for thousands that had gone forth.' A very slight consideration will explain the causes of this enormous mistake. In the first place, the continent was wholly exhausted by the long course of war—by the prodigious expenditure of capital that the war had demanded—by the wasteful consumption of mighty armies embattled against the oppressor—by the rapine of the predatory hordes that were let loose upon their soil—by confiscation. The people had necessarily the greatest difficulty to maintain life; they had little to spare for the secondary necessaries—nothing for indulgence. The merchants of our own country—the nation in general—had been so accustomed to the outward indications of prosperity at home during the course of the war, that they had no adequate idea that war was the great destroyer of capital, and that it essentially left all mankind poorer. In the second place, what had the continent to give us in exchange for our coffee and our sugar, our calicoes and our cutlery? The old mercantile school still existed amongst us, who thought that the perfection of commerce was to exchange goods for money, and that a great commercial nation might subsist without barter. But the continent had no money to exchange for English

products, even if the exploded theories of the balance of trade could have found any realisation. The continent, exhausted as it was, had its native commodities; but those we refused. France had her wines, but we resolved, in the spirit of the most high-flown patriotism, not to receive them upon equal terms with those of Portugal; the Baltic had its timber, but we determined to build our houses with the inferior growth of our North American colonies; the entire north of Europe would have applied itself to raising a surplus produce of corn for our increasing non-agricultural population, but the corn-law of 1815 forbade the calling forth of the natural resources of the whole earth to remedy the miseries of occasional local scarcity; Holland and Belgium had their cheese and butter to supply the insufficient dairy produce of these islands, but new prohibitory duties were imposed, directly that we could resort to their markets. We panted for continental trade; we believed that the peace would give us the marts of the whole world. But we doggedly held on in a course of commercial regulation which belonged only to the infancy of society. We perpetuated foreign restrictions and exclusions of our own manufactured produce, by persistence in a system which other nations of necessity regarded as the cause of our manufacturing superiority. We did not then know how essentially this system retarded our national progress. We listened to those who, on every side, clamoured for exclusive interests. Agriculturists and manufacturers, landowners and shipowners, equally shouted for protection.

The state of the American trade of 1816 was described by Mr. Brougham, after speaking of the disastrous results of the continental speculations: 'The peace with America has produced somewhat of a similar effect; though I am very far from placing the vast exports which it occasioned upon the same footing with those to the European markets the year before; because ultimately the Americans will pay, which the exhausted state of the continent renders very unlikely.' Let us remark that we did not prevent the Americans paying in the only way in which one great people can pay another—by the interchange of commodities which each wants, in return for commodities of which

each can produce a superfluity. We shut out their corn, but we did not shut out their cotton. In 1813 we retained for consumption only fifty million pounds of cotton-wool; in 1814, only fifty-three millions; the amount consumed of each year being less than that of 1804. The peace with America came at the end of 1814. In 1815 we consumed ninety-two million pounds; in 1816, eighty-six million pounds; in 1817, one hundred and sixteen million pounds; and in 1818, one hundred and sixty-two million pounds. But we went further with the United States in the recognition of just commercial principles, than with any European nation. By the Treaty of Ghent, in 1814, both countries agreed to repeal their navigation laws, and 'the ships of the two countries were placed reciprocally upon the same footing in the ports of England and the United States, and all discriminating duties chargeable upon the goods which they conveyed were mutually repealed.'

The distresses of the agricultural and the commercial interests were thus coincident. The prices of agricultural produce were depressed by superabundance; but the superabundance and the consequent low prices produced small benefit to the manufacturing consumers. The prices of manufacturing produce were depressed by the glut provided for extravagant speculation; but the glut produced no increase in the command over the secondary necessaries to the agricultural consumers. The means of purchase amongst all classes were exhausted. The capital which was to impel their profitable industry was dried up. There was 'a very general depression in the prices of nearly all productions, and in the value of all fixed property, entailing a convergence of losses and failures among the agricultural, and commercial, and manufacturing, and mining, and shipping, and building interests, which marked that period as one of the most extensive suffering and distress.' Some proclaimed that the depression and the distress were caused, not by the exhaustion of war, but by 'the transition from a state of war to a state of peace.' The theory upon which this delusion was upheld was this: 'The whole annual war expenditure, to the amount of not less than forty millions, was at once withdrawn from circulation. But public expenditure is like the fountain tree

in the Indian paradise, which diffuses in fertilising streams the vapours which it was created to collect and condense for the purpose of more beneficially returning and distributing them.' According to this logical imagery, or imaginative logic, the capital of a nation in the pockets of its proprietors is 'vapour;' it becomes a 'fertilising stream' when it condenses into taxes. It assumes that there is more demand when the capital of a country is expended by government, than when the same capital is expended by individuals. It assumes that the expenditure of capital by government, in subsidies, in the wasteful consumption of armies, in all the wear and tear of war, is more profitable than the expenditure of capital in the general objects of industry which create more capital. It assumes that the partial expenditure of capital by government in its victualling offices, is more profitable than the regular expenditure of the same capital left in the pockets of the tax-payers, to give them an additional command over the comforts and elegances of life. One who saw through a fallacy as clearly as any person, and had no respect for the mincing phrases of the worshippers of power—William Cobbett—says of such dreams of the advantage of government expenditure: 'To hear this talk, one would suppose that government was a very rich and generous thing, having an immense estate of its own, instead of being what it is—the collector of enormous sums drawn away from the people at large.' This fallacy, as well as many others connected with the depression of industry at the close of the war, has been disproved by the long experience of peace. We now know that consumption has increased at a more rapid rate than at any period during the quarter of a century of wild profusion; that the agricultural and manufacturing production of the country has increased in the same proportion; that the real property of the nation has received the like increase; that the increase of population has been more than commensurate. We had arrived in 1816 at the highest point of war exhaustion. The peace came as the slow but sure corrective. Had the war been prolonged another three years, upon the same scale as the expenditure of 1813-14-15—had one hundred and ninety-seven millions more been thrown away of the capital of

the nation—it may be doubted whether sixty years of peace, instead of thirty, would have repaired the consequences of such an unnatural exhaustion.

Although the time is not arrived for presenting any details connected with the resumption of cash-payments by the Bank of England, it is necessary that we should very briefly notice the opinion which so generally obtained in 1816, that the depreciation of the currency during the war, and the practical return to a real standard at the period of peace, was a main if not the sole cause of the distress and embarrassment which we have described. Cobbett, in his strong and exaggerated style, puts the argument thus: 'From this time [1797] there has been little besides paper-money. This became plenty, and, of course, wages and corn and everything became high in price. But, when the peace came, it was necessary to reduce the quantity of paper-money; because, when we came to have intercourse with foreign nations, it would never do to sell a one-pound note at Calais, as was the case, for about thirteen shillings. The Bank and the government had it in their power to lessen the quantity of paper. Down came prices in a little while; and if the debt and taxes had come down too, in the same degree, there would have been no material injury; but they did not. Taxes have continued the same. Hence our ruin, the complete ruin of the great mass of farmers, and tradesmen, and small landlords; and hence the misery of the people.' This was published in November 1816. The theory might be right, that the reduced amount of the currency was the main cause of the depression of prices, if the facts were here correctly stated. But the Bank of England at the peace scarcely contracted its issues at all. In August 1813, the circulation of bank-notes was nearly twenty-five millions; at the same season in 1814, it was twenty-eight millions; in 1815, twenty-seven millions; in 1816, only half a million less. The utmost amount of the depreciation of bank-notes was in 1814, when a hundred pounds of paper would only buy £74 17*s.* 6*d.* of gold—a depreciation of about 25 per cent. In 1815 and 1816 a hundred pounds of paper would buy £83 5*s.* 9*d.* of gold—a depreciation of nearly 17 per cent. Thus the rise in the

value of money which Cobbett, and many others of less violent politics, declared had produced the wide-spreading ruin of 1816, by causing a proportionate fall of the prices of commodities exchanged for money, was not more than 8 per cent., as compared with the period when the value of an unconvertible paper-money was at the lowest. It is no less true that a vast amount of paper-money was withdrawn from circulation at this period, by the failure of many country-banks, and the contraction of their advances by all who were stable. This was a consequence of the great fall of agricultural produce—a consequence of the diminished credit of the producers. When the restriction upon cash-payments by the Bank of England was, in 1816, agreed to be renewed for two years, the bearing of the continuance of the restriction upon the state of prices was not overlooked. An extract from Mr. Horner's speech on the 1st May 1816, on his motion for a committee to inquire into the expediency of restoring the cash-payments of the Bank of England, will supply all that is necessary at this point of our history for the elucidation of this complicated subject: 'He would ask the House, had they felt no evils from the long suspension of cash-payments? Were they sensible of no evils, after all that had passed in the course of the discussions of the agricultural distress, during which no one had been hardy enough to deny that a great evil had arisen from the sudden destruction of the artificial prices? Would any man say that there had not been a great change in the value of money? What this was owing to, might be disputed; but, for his own part, he had not the least doubt. From inquiries which he had made, and from the accounts on the table, he was convinced that a greater and more sudden reduction of the circulating medium had never taken place in any country, than had taken place since the peace in this country, with the exception of those reductions which had happened in France after the Mississippi scheme, and after the destruction of the assignats. He should not go into the question how this reduction had been effected, though it was a very curious one, and abounded in illustrations of the principles which had been so much disputed in that House. *The reduction of the currency had originated in the previous fall of*

the prices of agricultural produce. This fall had produced a destruction of the country-bank paper to an extent which would not have been thought possible without more ruin than had ensued. The Bank of England had also reduced its issues, as appeared by the accounts recently presented. The average amount of their currency was not, during the last year, more than between twenty-five and twenty-six millions; while two years ago it had been nearer twenty-nine millions, and at one time even amounted to thirty-one millions. But without looking to the diminution of the Bank of England paper, the reduction of country paper was enough to account for the fall which had taken place. Another evil which had resulted from the state of the currency, which he had foreseen and predicted, but which had been deemed visionary, was, that during the war we had borrowed money, which was then of small value, and we were now obliged to pay it at a high value. This was the most formidable evil which threatened our finances; and, though he had too high an opinion of the resources of the country, and of the wisdom of the government, to despair, he was appalled when he considered the immense amount of the interest of the debt contracted in that artificial currency, compared with the produce of the taxes. . . . Looking forward to the operation of this restriction in time of peace, it would be found to leave us without any known or certain standard of money to regulate the transactions, not only between the public and its creditors, but between individuals. The currency which was to prevail was not only uncertain, but cruel and unjust in its operation—at one time upon those whose income was fixed in money, and to all creditors—at another time, when by some accident it was diminished in amount, to all debtors. Was not this an evil sufficient to attract the attention of a wise, a benevolent, and a prudent government? If they looked at the agricultural interest, was not a fluctuation of prices the greatest of evils to the farmer? For, supposing prices were fixed and steady, it was indifferent to him what was the standard. As long as we had no standard—no fixed value of money—but it was suffered to rise and fall like the quick-silver in the barometer, no man could conduct his property with any

security, or depend upon any sure and certain profit. Persons who were aware of the importance of this subject must be surely anxious to know whether there were any imperative reasons for continuing the present system; to know whether it was intended to revert to the old system; and if not now, when that system would be reverted to, and what would be the best means for bringing about that measure.'

Here, for the present, we leave this question of the currency.

CHAPTER IV.

Labour—Coal Districts—Machine-Breaking—Private Benevolence.

A French author, in one of those rapid generalisations which are characteristic of much of the modern historical writing of his country, and which, if not quite so far removed from truth as a positive falsification of facts, are as certainly deceptive—M. Capefigue—thus describes the condition of Great Britain after the peace: 'The Convention of 1815 had scarcely been signed before England saw a formidable conspiracy of radicalism spring up in her bosom. It was not confined to a few outbreaks easily repressed, but displayed itself in masses of a hundred thousand workmen, who destroyed factories and pillaged houses. It was as if the earth trembled, ready to swallow up the old aristocracy.' Let us endeavour to come somewhat nearer the truth, by tracing, through a multitude of details, the real dangers and the exaggerated alarms of this moral earthquake.

We have shown how the exhaustion of British capital, the unavoidable consequent weight of taxation, the depression of agricultural stock, the want of markets for native and colonial produce, had produced that paralysis of industry which marked the latter months of 1815 and the beginning of 1816. That these circumstances were most felt by those whose voices of complaint were least heard, by the working population, was soon made perfectly

manifest. There was a surplus of labour in every department of human exertion. Mr. Brand declared in parliament, at the end of March, speaking especially of the agricultural population, that 'the poor, in many cases, abandoned their own residences. Whole parishes had been deserted; and the crowd of paupers, increasing in numbers as they went from parish to parish, spread wider and wider this awful desolation.' Discharged sailors and disbanded militia-men swelled the ranks of indigence. If the unhappy wanderers crowded to the cities, they encountered bodies of workmen equally wretched, wholly deprived of work, or working at short time upon insufficient wages. But another evil, of which we find no parliamentary record, amidst debates on the prevailing distress, had come upon the land to aggravate discontent into desperation. While the landowners were demanding more protection, and passing new laws for limiting the supply of food, the heavens lowered—intense frosts prevailed in February—the spring was inclement—the temperature of the advancing summer was unusually low—and in July incessant rains and cold stormy winds completed the most ungenial season that had occurred in this country since 1799. In January the average price of wheat was 52*s.* 6*d.*; in May it was 76*s.* 4*d.* The apprehensions of a deficient crop were universal, in Germany, in France, and in the south of Europe. The result of the harvest showed that these apprehensions were not idle. The prices of grain in England rapidly rose after July; and at the end of the year, rye, barley, and beans had more than doubled the average market-price of the beginning; wheat had risen from 52*s.* 6*d.* to 103*s.*

'The matter of seditions is of two kinds,' says Lord Bacon—'much poverty and much discontentment.' Both causes were fully operating in Great Britain in 1816. The seditions of absolute poverty—'the rebellions of the belly,' as the same great thinker writes—were the first to manifest themselves. Early in May, symptoms of insubordination and desperate violence were displayed amongst the agricultural population of the eastern counties. Legislators had been accustomed to look with alarm at the organised outbreaks of large bodies of workmen in the

manufacturing districts, as in 1812; but insurrectionary movements of the peasantry, ignorant, scattered, accustomed to the dole of forced benevolence, and therefore broken in spirit, were scarcely to be heeded. And yet these 'poor dumb mouths' made themselves audible. They combined in the destruction of property with a fierce recklessness that startled those who saw no danger but in the violence of dense populations, and who were constantly proclaiming that the nation which builds on manufactures sleeps upon gunpowder. In Suffolk nightly fires of incendiaries began to blaze in every district; thrashing-machines were broken or burnt in open day; mills were attacked. At Brandon, near Bury, large bodies of labourers assembled to prescribe a maximum price of grain and meat, and to pull down the houses of butchers and bakers. They bore flags, with the motto: 'Bread or blood.' At Bury and at Norwich disturbances of a similar nature were quickly repressed. But the most serious demonstration of the spirit of the peasantry arose in what is called 'the Isle of Ely,' that isolated fen-country which is cultivated by a population of primitive habits, a daring and active population, with much of the dogged reliance upon brute force which characterised their Saxon forefathers. Early in the session, Mr. Western described the agricultural distress of this district as exceeding that of most other parts of the kingdom. Executions upon the property of the cultivators, distresses for rent, insolvencies, farms untenanted, were the symptoms of this remarkable depression. When we regard the peculiar character of this portion of the country, we may easily understand how a great fall in the prices of grain had driven the land out of cultivation, and cast off the labour of the peasantry, to be as noxious in its stagnation as the overcharged waters of that artificially fertile region. That country was then very imperfectly drained; and the rates for the imperfect drainage being unpaid by many tenants, the destructive agencies of nature were more active than the healing and directing energies of man. It is well known, too, that in the fen-countries the temptation of immediate profit had more than commonly led the farmer to raise exhausting crops, and that the nature of the land

under such circumstances is such that a more provident tillage, and abundant manure, cannot for a long time restore it. The high prices of wheat from 1810 to 1814 had supplied this temptation. The Isle of Ely in 1816 had become somewhat like Prospero's isle, where there was 'everything advantageous to life,' save means to live. It was under such circumstances that, on the 22nd of May, a great body of insurgent fenmen assembled at Littleport, a small town on the river Lark. They commenced their riotous proceedings by a night-attack on the house of a magistrate. They broke into shops, emptied the cellars of public-houses, and finally marched to Ely, where they continued their lawless course of drunkenness and plunder. For two days and nights these scenes of violence did not cease; and the parish of Littleport was described as resembling a town sacked by a besieging army, the principal inhabitants having been compelled to abandon their houses, in terror for their lives, leaving their property to the fury of this fearful band of desperate men. There could, of necessity, be but one termination. The military were called in, and a sort of skirmish ensued, in which blood flowed on both sides. A large number of the rioters were finally lodged in Ely gaol. Then came the sure retribution of the offended laws. A special commission was issued for the trial of the culprits. Thirty-four persons were convicted and sentenced to death, on charges of burglary and robbery; of whom five were executed. In pronouncing sentence upon these unhappy men, Mr. Justice Abbot said: 'It was suggested abroad that you had been induced to perpetrate these violent outrages by hard necessity and want; but after attending closely and strictly to the whole tenor of the evidence, there has not appeared in the condition, circumstances, or behaviour of any one of you, any reason to suppose that you were instigated by distress.' And yet great distress might have existed in the general population, without the wretched leaders in these riots being especially distressed; for several of those who underwent the capital punishment were persons above the condition of labourers. It is difficult to believe that the distress of the landowners and tenants should have been greater in the Isle of Ely

than in most other parts of the kingdom, and that the labourers should not have been impelled to outrage by 'hard necessity and want.'

Incendiary fires, attempts at plunder, riots put down by military force, spread alarm through districts chiefly agricultural. The distress which had fallen upon the manufacturing and other non-agricultural portions of the population was manifested in many signal ways. At the beginning of July, a body of colliers, thrown out of employment by the stoppage of ironworks at Bilston, took the singular resolution of setting out to London, for the purpose of submitting their distresses in a petition to the prince-regent, and presenting him with two waggons of coals, which they drew along with them. One party advanced as far as St. Albans, and another reached Maidenhead Thicket. The Home Office took the precaution of sending a strong body of police, with magistrates, from London, to meet these poor fellows, and induce them to return; and they were successful. The men, who had conducted themselves with the most perfect order, were satisfied to depart homewards, having been paid for their coals, and accepting also some charitable contribution. They bore a placard: 'Willing to work, but none of us to beg;' and they required certificates from the magistrates that they had conducted themselves with propriety. Their example was followed by other unemployed colliers from Staffordshire, who yoked themselves in a similar way to loaded waggons. But their progress towards London was not very considerable. The distresses of the workmen in the iron trade were quite appalling. Utter desolation prevailed in districts where ironworks had been suspended. The workmen in these districts used to be surrounded with many comforts. They had saved a little money. The factories were shut up; the furnaces blown out; the coal-pits closed. Then the neat cottages, where hundreds of families had lived in comfort, were gradually stripped of every article of furniture; the doors of these once cheerful dwellings were barred; the families were wandering about the country, seeking for that relief from private charity which the parishes could not offer. Depredation was very rare. Later in the year,

the miners and colliers connected with the great iron-works in the neighbourhood of Merthyr, assembled in a tumultuous manner; and their numbers gradually swelling till they reached ten or twelve thousand, they finally extinguished the blast at several works, but did little other damage. These men were on very reduced wages, but their distress does not seem to have been nearly so great as the utter destitution of the Staffordshire colliers.

In the year 1812 an act was passed 'for the more exemplary punishment of persons destroying or injuring any stocking or lace frames, or other machines or engines used in the framework-knitting manufactory, or any articles or goods in such frames or machines.' The object of the act was to make the offence capital. The cause for this increase to the fearful list of offences to which the penalty of death was attached, was the system of riot and destruction, bordering on insurrection, which had prevailed in Nottingham and the adjacent counties for more than three months. There never before was such an organised system of havoc resorted to by men who were at once grossly ignorant and pre-eminently crafty. 'The depredations had been carried on with a greater degree of secrecy and management than had ever been known in any similar proceedings; so much so, that the magistrates could not take upon themselves to apprehend the persons whom they suspected of having committed the outrages. It was peculiarly easy for parties who were ill-disposed, to perpetrate those illegal acts; for, in many instances, the machinery was used in isolated houses, which were far from any neighbourhood, and persons having secreted themselves about the premises, felt no difficulty in destroying the frames, which could be performed with very little noise. In one instance, the mischief had been done actually in sight of the military; and in another, they were not more than one hundred yards from the premises. The rioters had also occasionally gone to the villages in bodies of about fifty men, and having stationed sentinels at the different avenues, the remainder employed themselves in destroying all the frames; and this was executed with so much secrecy, that not a trace of the parties was left in the course of a few minutes.' Such was the

character of the Luddite insurrection of 1812. In spite of the increase of punishment, the system was never wholly put down. In 1816 it broke forth with new violence. At Loughborough, in July, many frames employed in the manufacture of lace were destroyed with the same secrecy as in 1812. Armed bands, under the command of a chief, held the inhabitants in nightly terror, commanding them to put out their lights, and keep within their houses, under penalty of death. Their ravages were not confined to the towns: they would march with suddenness and secrecy to distant villages, and rapidly effect their purposes of destruction. The General Ludd, who led on these armed and disguised desperadoes, would address his forces in a short speech, divide them into parties, and assign their respective operations. Then, in the silence of night, would houses and factories be broken open, frames and other machines demolished, unfinished work scattered on the highways, furniture be wholly destroyed. The ignorance which has more or less prevailed at all times on the subject of machinery—coupled with the want of employment produced by the depression of every branch of industry—was the cause that, undeterred by the terrible penalties of the law, the Luddites still pursued the course which had well-nigh driven the lace manufacture from their district, and converted temporary into permanent ruin. The futility of the legislation of 1812 was well exposed in a protest of Lords Lauderdale and Rosslyn on the introduction of the bill: 'We agree in the opinion so generally expressed in this House, that the conduct of the manufacturers, in destroying frames and other machinery used in our manufactures, must proceed from mistaken views of their own interest, as they, more than any other class of his majesty's subjects, are deeply interested in the preservation of machinery, to the improvement of which we owe our existence as a manufacturing country. But we think it our duty, strongly and in distinct terms, to reprobate the unprecedented folly of attempting to enlighten the minds of men in regard to what is beneficial for themselves, by increased severity of punishment; whilst every sound principle of criminal legislation makes us regard such an

addition to the long list of offences already subjected to capital punishment by the laws of this country, with astonishment and disgust; and every feeling of humanity leads us to express the utmost horror at the wanton cruelty of punishing our fellow-creatures with death for these culpable acts, more injurious to themselves than to any other part of the community, to which, through mistaken views of policy, the increasing distress of the times has induced them to resort.'

The wealthier classes of this country are never wanting in the disposition to relieve the distresses of their fellow-subjects by liberal contributions. The sufferings of the poor in 1816 were too manifest not to call forth an unusual amount of public sympathy, displayed in subscriptions for relief, and in schemes for providing employment. However local charity may have mitigated the intensity of the evil arising out of the general exhaustion of capital, a calm review of the more ostentatious exertions of that period forces upon us the conclusion that such attempts are for the most part wholly inefficient—more calculated to produce a deceptive calm in the minds of those who give, than to afford any real or permanent benefit to those who receive.

On the 29th July a very remarkable meeting took place at the City of London Tavern, 'to take into consideration the present distressed state of the lower classes, and the most effectual means of extending relief to them.' The Duke of York took the chair; the Duke of Kent and the Duke of Cambridge moved resolutions; the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London also took part in the proceedings, as well as several peers, the chancellor of the exchequer, and Mr. Wilberforce. This meeting for purposes of holy charity was converted into a political brawl. It was a time of brawlers; but the rude energy and the bad taste of much of the declamation that disturbed the quiet of public meetings was not wholly removed from strong sense and unanswerable reasoning. Lord Cochrane, on this occasion, compelled the alteration of a resolution which declared 'That the transition from an extensive warfare to a system of peace has occasioned a stagnation of employment and a revulsion of trade.' The

promoters of the meeting consented to affirm the fact, without setting up a delusive cause. The Duke of Kent, who moved the first resolution, said: 'If *they* should be so happy as but to succeed in discovering new sources of employment, to supply the place of those channels which had been suddenly shut up, he should indeed despond if we did not soon restore the country to that same flourishing condition which had long made her the envy of the world.' The goodness of the intention could only be exceeded by the absurdity of the means. Here was a body of the great and wealthy coming forward to subscribe some forty or fifty thousand, perhaps even a hundred thousand pounds, not merely to give away as bread and soup to two or three millions of suffering labourers and their families, but to find, out of this fifty or a hundred thousand pounds capital, new sources of employment, which the millions of capital that were devoted to the ordinary courses of industry would have instantly created, if such new employments could have been profitably exercised. The new employment was, of course, to be unprofitable; it could afford no returns to produce continued employment. The promoters of this meeting themselves saw something of the fallacy, and talked of the inadequacy of their means to relieve national distress. The persons who disturbed the usual placid and complimentary course of such proceedings, clamoured for remission of taxation, reduced expenditure, abolition of sinecures. Upon this subject the chief organ of government thus expressed the opinions of the wealthier classes; 'Such numerous bodies of men having been thrown out of employ, every good man perceived the necessity of affording them temporary relief, and the propriety of relieving the poor-rates by voluntary aid, till alterative measures of permanent policy could be devised and brought into action for gradually removing a burthen that was becoming intolerable.' According to this authority, the subscriptions did not add to the fund for the relief of distress; they were in aid of the poor-rates, and not in addition to them. The poor-rates in 1816 were half a million less than in 1814; the price of bread was higher; the population was increased; and the number of quarters of wheat for which the money raised

by poor-rate could have been exchanged, was two hundred and forty-thousand quarters less in 1816 than in 1814, and two hundred thousand quarters less in 1816 than in 1815. To put the efficiency of the poor-rates upon the same level in 1816 as they were in 1814, by the aid of voluntary subscriptions, the committee of the London Tavern ought to have raised as much money as would have purchased two hundred and fifty thousand quarters of wheat, which at the time of this great meeting would have cost more than a million sterling. We mention these facts, not to make ourselves obnoxious to the reproof then levelled against the reformers, that they realised the old story of the Needy Knife-grinder and the Friend of Humanity, but to point out the folly of deceiving our own consciences as to the power of alms-giving to afford adequate relief in great periods of national distress. The first duty of the capitalist is to understand what are the real claims of labour under ordinary circumstances, and what the amount of assistance that can be rendered under extraordinary contingencies. It is the duty of government so to shape its policy that the necessary inequalities of demand and supply shall not be rendered more oppressive by false legislation. All contention for interests of classes or individuals—all blindness to the dreadful calamity of an unemployed, inadequately paid, starving, and therefore dangerous population—are best exhibited in their fatal consequences, when it is seen how totally incompetent is the heartiest exercise of private benevolence to remedy great public suffering. The economical mistakes of such private benevolence would be matters of ridicule if they were not so awful in their delusions. In 1816, hand corn-mills were recommended for the employment of the poor, to supersede the labour of the miller; and women and even men were actually employed to shell beans in the fields, to supersede the more efficient labour of the thrasher. Minor schemes were recommended in London, and published to the world authoritatively, as remedies for the absence of profitable employment. Of these the most notable were the making of cordage out of hop-bines and weeds; the gathering of rushes to manufacture candles from the grease-pot; the

plaiting of baskets out of flags; and the mixture of fire-balls out of clay and cinders, to supersede coals. It is perfectly clear that if these employments could be found profitable by the sale of the articles produced, the regular employment in rope-making, or candle-making, or basket-making, or coal-mining, would have been diminished. Even the soup-kitchens, which in 1816 were set up through the country, to avert starvation, had their evils. The recipients of the benevolence were discontented with its limited amount. At Glasgow some imaginary insult offered by a doler of the soup to the more unfortunate of that large community, stung the people to madness; the soup-kitchen, with its coppers and ladles, was destroyed; the outrage swelled to riot; the military were called in; and for two days the populous city was exposed to a contest between the soldiers and the mob. At Dundee the people relieved themselves in the old summary way of plunder; a hundred shops were ransacked.

CHAPTER V.

Parliamentary Reform—Writings of Cobbett—Hampden Clubs—Spenceans—Address of the City—Real Dangers.

Lord Bacon, discoursing of the second cause of sedition—'discontentments'—says; 'There is in every state, as we know, two portions of subjects, the noblesse and the commonalty. When one of these is discontent, the danger is not great; for common people are of slow motion, if they be not excited by the greater sort; and the greater sort are of small strength, except the multitude be apt and ready to move of themselves.' We at once perceive that the experience of Lord Bacon was limited to a totally different state of society than that of modern England. On one hand was 'the noblesse,' 'the greater sort'—the makers of laws, the exclusive possessors of power; on the other, 'the commonalty,' 'the common people,' 'the multitude'—strong in union, feeble in individuality. It required a century and a half to constitute an efficient

third class—the middle class—the *bourgeoisie* of the French. The commonalty was then cut into two sections—the most influential of the two standing between the higher class and the lower class. The term 'lower class,' or 'lower classes,' is gone out of use. The term is thought not complimentary to the democracy, and so we say 'the working-class,' which is less precise, and conveys false notions. The union which Lord Bacon exhibited as the most fearful to the sovereign power, was that which sprang from the common discontent of the nobles and the people. A monarch, according to the great imaginative philosopher, should be the Jupiter whom Pallas counselled to call Briareus, with his hundred arms, to his aid. Sure of the good-will of the common people, he was safe. We see how all this consists with the government of the Tudors and the first Stuart; how strictly it represents the attributes of an imperfect civilization; how much remained to be developed before the more favoured of fortune, the more complete in education and intelligence of 'the commonalty,' could be raised up into a new class. The far grander problem of the full development of the class lowest in point of wealth and power—of the class highest in point of numbers—of the most truly important class with reference to the happiness and safety of modern societies—this problem is little advanced toward solution in our own day. It scarcely formed an element in the habitual consideration of a legislator thirty years ago. And yet the agitation of this class convulsed our whole social system at that period. Those struggles were, in truth, the first moving forces of the great changes which have since taken place in the political position of the class next above the masses; and, as a natural consequence, indirectly in their own position.

Up to the close of 1816, the spirit of parliamentary reform was seldom evoked in the British parliament. When the spirit was occasionally raised, upon the presentation of some stray petition, it had no alarms for the most timid, and very few consolations for the most ardent. It was a good quiet spirit 'in the cellarage'—an 'old mole'—that called out, in antiquated phrase, about Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights; and the House of Commons

listened as to some gabble which concerned it not, and went on with its proper work of Whig and Tory fence, conducted upon the most approved principles of the first masters of the science. But the 'worthy pioneer' got above ground in 1816, and, when he was fairly loosened to the open sky, he was not quite so tame, and innocent, and stupid a spirit as his ordinary supporters and his systematic revilers had been in the habit of believing him to be.

The House of Commons was not generally popular in 1816. We have better evidence for the fact than that of the pamphleteering or oratorical champions of reform. Mr. Hallam, a calm, constitutional Whig of that day, rejoices over the defeat of the ministry on the property-tax, chiefly because that decision had removed 'the danger of increasing the odium under which the House of Commons already labours among a large class of people, by so decidedly resisting the wishes of the nation.' And yet the call for parliamentary reform seems to have made itself very feebly heard in the Lower House at this period. With the exception of some four or five petitions that produced very slight discussion, it would scarcely be thought, from an inspection of the parliamentary debates, that such a question agitated any part of the nation at all. On one occasion, in June, some members spoke very briefly upon the subject. One complained of the apathy with which the question was regarded in England; another (Mr. Brougham) mentioned the cause as 'opposed by some, deserted by others, and espoused by persons whose conduct excited no small degree of disgust out of doors.' But from this time the name of parliamentary reform became, for the most part, a name of terror to the government—to the elevated by rank and wealth—to the most influential of the middle classes. It became fearful from the causes which would have made it contemptible in ordinary times. It was 'espoused by persons whose conduct excited no small degree of disgust out of doors.' It passed away from the patronage of a few aristocratic lovers of popularity, to be advocated by writers of 'twopenny trash,' and to be discussed and organised by 'Hampden Clubs' of hungering philanthropists and unemployed 'weaver-boys.'

Let us hear the evidence upon this matter of a remark-

able man—a man of real native talent, and, like a very large number of his class, of honest intentions:

'At this time [1816] the writings of William Cobbett suddenly became of great authority; they were read on nearly every cottage hearth in the manufacturing districts of South Lancashire, in those of Leicester, Derby, and Nottingham; also in many of the Scottish manufacturing towns. Their influence was speedily visible; he directed his readers to the true cause of their sufferings—misgovernment; and to its proper corrective—parliamentary reform. Riots soon became scarce, and from that time they have never obtained their ancient vogue with the labourers of this country.

'Let us not descend to be unjust. Let us not withhold the homage which, with all the faults of William Cobbett, is still due to his great name.

'Instead of riots and destruction of property, Hampden Clubs were now established in many of our large towns, and the villages and districts around them; Cobbett's books were printed in a cheap form; the labourers read them, and thenceforward became deliberate and systematic in their proceedings. Nor were there wanting men of their own class to encourage and direct the new converts; the Sunday-schools of the preceding thirty years had produced many working-men of sufficient talent to become readers, writers, and speakers in the village meetings for parliamentary reform; some also were found to possess a rude poetic talent, which rendered their effusions popular, and bestowed an additional charm on their assemblages; and by such various means, anxious listeners at first, and then zealous proselytes, were drawn from the cottages of quiet nooks and dingles, to the weekly readings and discussions of the Hampden Clubs.'

Cobbett himself, on the 21st December 1816, wrote as follows:

'The country, instead of being disturbed, as the truly seditious writers on the side of corruption would fain make us believe; instead of being "irritated" by the agitation of the question of reform, is kept by the hope which reform holds out to it, in a state of tranquillity, wholly unparalleled in the history of the world, under a

similar pressure of suffering. Of this fact the sad scenes at Dundee are a strong and remarkable instance. At the great and populous towns of Norwich, Manchester, Paisley, Glasgow, Wigan, Bolton, Liverpool, and many, many others, where the people are suffering in a degree that makes the heart sick within one to think of, they have had their meetings to petition for reform; they have agreed on petitions; hope has been left in their bosoms, they have been inspired with patience and fortitude; and all is tranquil. But, at Dundee, where a partial meeting had been held early in November, and where a gentleman who moved for reform had been borne down, there violence has broken forth, houses have been plundered, and property and life exposed to all sort of perils, and this, too, amongst the sober, the sedate, the reflecting, the prudent, the moral people of Scotland.'

The writings of William Cobbett, at this critical period, are certainly amongst the most valuable of the materials for a correct view of the disturbing elements of our social system, and of the circumstances which led to the subsequent repressive policy of the government. Up to the 2nd November 1816, Cobbett's *Weekly Political Register* was a publication, not addressed to the 'cottage hearth,' but to persons who could afford to pay a shilling and a halfpenny weekly, for a single octavo stamped sheet, printed in open type. His writings, singularly clear and argumentative, strong in personalities, earnest, bold, never halting between two opinions, powerful beyond all anonymous writing from their rare individuality, would have commanded an extensive influence under any form of publication. But on the 2nd November, when the entire sheet was devoted to an address 'To the Journeymen and Labourers of England, Scotland, and Ireland,' Cobbett added this announcement: 'This address, printed upon an open sheet, will be sold by the publisher at 2*d.* each, and for 12*s.* 6*d.* a hundred, if a hundred are taken together.' On the 16th November, he wrote thus: 'The *Register*, No. 18, which was reprinted on an open sheet, to be sold for 2*d.* by retail, having been found to be very useful, it is my intention to continue that mode of proceeding until the meeting of parliament, or perhaps until the reform

shall have actually taken place. . . . . *Now*, events are pressing upon us so fast, that my *Register*, loaded with more than half its amount in stamp, and other expenses incidental to the stamp, does not move about sufficiently swift to do all the good that it might do. I have therefore resolved to make it move swifter.' He goes on to say that the stamped *Register* was 'read in meetings of people in many towns, and one copy was thus made to convey information to scores of persons; but that he finds, in public-houses, 'the landlords have objected to meetings for reading the *Register* being held at their houses, for fear they should lose their licences.' He accordingly prints the twopenny *Register*. We see, therefore, why, at the end of 1816, 'the writings of William Cobbett *suddenly* became of great authority, and were read on nearly every cottage-hearth in the manufacturing districts.' Never before had any single writer in England wielded such a power. The success of this experiment upon the influence to be produced by cheap publications was such as to lead him to reprint some of the more exciting of his previous *Registers*. That they gave the discontent of the labouring classes a new direction, cannot be doubted; that they did much to repress riot and outrage, may fairly be conceded. His 'Letter to the Luddites,' on the 30th November, is a master-piece of reasoning against the ignorant hostility to machinery, and must have been far more effectual than a regiment of dragoons. But that they were scattering the seeds of a greater danger than the outrage and plunder of infuriated mobs cannot be denied. Their object was suddenly to raise up the great masses of labourers and mechanics into active politicians; to render the most impatient and uncontrollable materials of our social system the most preponderating—hitherto as powerless alone as the 'commonalty' of Bacon, without the leading of the 'greater sort.' The danger was evident; the means of repression were not so clear. The effect of Cobbett's writings may be estimated by the violence of his opponents, as well as the admiration of his disciples. From the date of his twopenny *Registers* he was stigmatised as a 'firebrand,' 'a convicted incendiary.' 'Why is it that this convicted incendiary, and others of the same stamp,

are permitted, week after week, to sow the seeds of rebellion, insulting the government, and defying the laws of the country? . . . . We have laws to prevent the exposure of unwholesome meat in our markets, and the mixture of deleterious drugs in beer. We have laws also against poisoning the minds of the people, by exciting discontent and disaffection; why are not these laws rendered effectual, and enforced as well as the former?' The answer is very obvious. The laws, as they stood at the end of 1816, when this was written, could not touch William Cobbett. He knew well how to manage his strength. He risked no libels. He dealt with general subjects. He called upon the people to assemble and to petition. He exhorted the people against the use of force. He sowed the dragon's teeth, it is true, but they did not rise up as armed men. They rose up in the far more dangerous apparition of the masses, without property, without education, without leaders of any weight or responsibility, demanding the supreme legislative power —the power of universal suffrage. The idea ceased to be a theory—it became a tremendous reality.

In the report of the secret committee of the House of Commons, presented on the 19th February 1817, the Hampden Clubs are thus described:

'The first thing which has here forced itself upon their observation is the widely diffused ramification of a system of clubs, associated professedly for the purpose of parliamentary reform, upon the most extended principle of universal suffrage and annual parliaments. These clubs in general designate themselves by the same name of Hampden Clubs. On the professed object of their institution, they appear to be in communication and connection with the club of that name in London.

'It appears to be part of the system of these clubs to promote an extension of clubs of the same name and nature, so widely as, if possible, to include every village in the kingdom. The leading members are active in the circulation of publications likely to promote their object. Petitions, ready prepared, have been sent down from the metropolis to all societies in the country disposed to receive them. The communication between these

clubs takes place by the mission of delegates; delegates from these clubs in the country have assembled in London, and are expected to assemble again early in March. Whatever may be the real objects of these clubs in general, your committee have no hesitation in stating, from information on which they place full reliance, that in far the greater number of them, and particularly in those which are established in the great manufacturing districts of Lancashire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, and Derbyshire, and which are composed of the lower order of artisans, nothing short of a revolution is the object expected and avowed.'

The clear and honest testimony of Samuel Bamford shows that, in this early period of their history, the Hampden Clubs limited their object to the attainment of parliamentary reform—a sweeping reform, indeed, but not what is understood by the term 'revolution.' Bamford was secretary to one of these clubs established at Middleton in 1816. The members contributed each a penny a week; their numbers increased; and they held their meetings in a chapel which had been previously occupied by a society of Methodists. They were called 'reformers'—not radical reformers, but simply reformers. Meetings of delegates from other districts were held in this chapel; and on the 16th December 1816, they resolved to send out missionaries to disseminate the principles of reform. On the 1st of January 1817, a meeting of delegates from twenty-one petitioning bodies was held at the Middleton Chapel, when resolutions were passed, declaratory of the right of every male, above eighteen years of age, and who paid taxes, to vote for the election of members of parliament, and that parliaments should be elected annually. 'Such,' he adds, 'were the moderate views and wishes of the reformers of those days, as compared with the present. . . . Some of the nostrum-mongers of the present day would have been made short work of by the reformers of that time; they would not have been tolerated for more than one speech, but handed over to the civil power. It was not until we became infested by spies, incendiaries, and their dupes—distracting, misleading, and betraying—that physical force was mentioned amongst us. After that,

our moral power waned; and what we gained by the accession of demagogues, we lost by their criminal violence and the estrangement of real friends.' It would appear, however, that in Scotland, at a very early stage of the proceedings of reform clubs—that is, in December 1816—the mode in which large masses of men ordinarily look for the accomplishment of political changes was not so cautiously kept out of view. In the proceedings in the High Court of Justiciary, in Edinburgh, early in 1817, against two persons for administering unlawful oaths, the obligation of the members of these reform clubs was shown to run thus: 'I do voluntarily swear that I will persevere in my endeavouring to form a brotherhood of affection amongst Britons of every description, who are considered worthy of confidence; and that I will persevere in my endeavours to obtain for all the people in Great Britain and Ireland, not disqualified by crimes or insanity, the elective franchise, at the age of twenty-one, with free and equal representation and annual parliaments; and that I will support the same to the utmost of my power, *either by moral or physical strength, as the case may require:* and I do further swear, that neither hopes, fears, rewards, nor punishments, shall induce me to inform on, or give evidence against, any member or members, collectively or individually, for any act or expression done or made, in or out, in this or similar societies, under the punishment of death, to be inflicted on me by any member or members of such societies.'

Of the Hampden Club of London, Sir Francis Burdett was the chairman. Vanity, as well as misery, 'makes a man acquainted with strange bed-fellows.' Bamford, at the beginning of 1817, came to London as a delegate from the Middleton Club, to attend a great meeting of delegates to be assembled in London. The Crown and Anchor Tavern was the scene of these deliberations. There was Major Cartwright in the chair—a placid enthusiast, sincere in his belief that unmingled good would be the result of the great experiment which he had so long advocated. His chief supporters were 'Cobbett, with his shrewd self-possession and 'bantering jollity;' and Hunt—'orator Hunt,' as he was called—the incarnation of an

empty, blustering, restless, ignorant, and selfish demagogue. The great baronet was absent, and his absence provoked no little comment. But he was accessible in his own mansion; and the hard-handed delegates had an interview with this 'imp of fame,' in his dressing-gown and white cotton stockings, hanging about his long spare legs, with a 'manner dignified and civilly familiar; submitting to, rather than seeking conversation with, men of our class.' Samuel Bamford was awe-struck by the passionate bellowing of Hunt, frozen by the proud condescension of Sir Francis Burdett, but charmed by the unaffected cordiality of Lord Cochrane. These were the chief actors in the procession scenes of the popular drama that was then under rehearsal. Other and more important parts were filled quite as appropriately. The graphic descriptions of a poor delegate weaver, who saw the secret workings of this drama, are as much matter of real history as the debates of senators and the reports of secret committees; 'Several times I attended meetings of trades' clubs, and other public assemblages of the working-men. They would generally be found in a large room, an elevated seat being placed for the chairman. On first opening the door, the place seemed dimmed by a suffocating vapour of tobacco, curling from the cups of long pipes, and issuing from the mouths of the smokers, in clouds of abominable odour, like nothing in the world more than one of the unclean fogs of their streets; though the latter were certainly less offensive, and probably less hurtful. Every man would have his half-pint of porter before him; many would be speaking at once, and the hum and confusion would be such as gave an idea of there being more talkers than thinkers—more speakers than listeners. Presently, "Order!" would be called, and comparative silence would ensue; a speaker, stranger or citizen, would be announced with much courtesy and compliment; "Hear, hear, hear!" would follow, with clapping of hands, and knocking of knuckles on the tables till the half-pints danced; then a speech, with compliments to some brother orator or popular statesman; next a resolution in favour of parliamentary reform, and a speech to second it; an amendment on some minor point would follow; a seconding of that;

a breach of order by some individual of warm temperament: half-a-dozen would rise to set him right; a dozen to put them down; and the vociferation and gesticulation would become loud and confounding. The door opens, and two persons of middle stature enter; the uproar is changed to applause, and a round of huzzas welcome the new-comers. A stranger like myself inquiring who is he, the foremost and better dressed one? would be answered; "That gentleman is Mr. Watson the elder, who was lately charged with high treason, and is now under bail to answer an indictment for a misdemeanour in consequence of his connection with the late meeting in Spa-fields." The person spoken of would be supposed to be about fifty years of age, with somewhat of a polish in his gait and manner, and a degree of respectability and neatness in his dress. He was educated for a genteel profession, that of a surgeon; had practised it, and had in consequence moved in a sphere more high than his present one. He had probably a better heart than head; the latter had failed to bear him up in his station, and the ardour of the former had just before hurried him into transactions from the consequences of which he has not yet escaped. His son at this time was concealed in London, a large reward having been offered for his apprehension. The other man was Preston, a co-operator with Watson, Hooper, and others in late riots. He was about middle age; of ordinary appearance, dressed as an operative, and walked with the help of a stick. I could not but entertain a slightful opinion of the intellect and trustworthiness of these two men, when, on a morning or two afterwards, at breakfast with me and Mitchell, they narrated with seeming pride and satisfaction their several parts during the riots. Preston had mounted a wall of the Tower, and summoned the guard to surrender. The men gazed at him—laughed; no one fired a shot—and soon after he fell down, or was pulled off by his companions, who thought, no doubt, he had acted fool long enough.'

The 'late meeting at Spa-fields' here alluded to—the leaders of that meeting who loomed upon the Middleton delegate out of the reeking tobacco fog of a low tavern—were destined to become of historical importance. The

general liberties of the country were suspended, chiefly through dread of the conspiracies of such men as the surgeon 'with somewhat of a polish in his gait and manner,' and the operative who 'walked with the help of a stick.'

The surgeon and the operative were leading members of a society called the 'Spencean Philanthropists.' They derived their name from that of a Mr. Spence, a schoolmaster in Yorkshire, who had conceived a plan for making the nation happy, by causing all the lands of the country to become the property of the state, which state should divide all the produce for the support of the people. The schoolmaster was an honest enthusiast, who fearlessly submitted his plan to the consideration of all lovers of their species, and had the misfortune to be prosecuted for its promulgation in 1800. In 1816, 'Spence's Plan' was revived, and the Society of Spencean Philanthropists was instituted, who held 'sectional meetings,' and discussed 'subjects calculated to enlighten the human understanding.' This great school of philosophy had its separate academies, as London was duly informed by various announcements, at 'the Cock in Grafton Street, Soho;' and 'the Mulberry Tree, Moorfields;' and 'the Nag's Head, Carnaby Market;' and 'No. 8, Lumber Street, Borough.' At these temples of benevolence where 'every individual is admitted, free of expense, who will conduct himself with decorum,' it is not unlikely that some esoteric doctrines were canvassed, such as, that 'it was an easy matter to upset government, if handled in a proper manner.' The committee of the Spenceans openly meddled with sundry grave questions besides that of a community in land; and amongst other notable projects, petitioned parliament to do away with machinery. They had not advanced to the more recondite knowledge of the St. Simoniens of France, nor to that of the disciples of 'the new social system,' as expounded by M. Louis Blanc. But they had many very pretty theories, all founded upon the breaking up of the unequal distribution of individual property; which theories are sometimes produced by the philanthropists of our own day as prodigious discoveries. Amongst these otherwise harmless fanatics some dangerous

men had established themselves—such as Thistlewood, who subsequently paid the penalty of five years of maniacal plotting; and some, also, who were clearly in communication with the police, and hounded on the weak disciples of the Cock in Grafton Street, and the Mulberry Tree in Moorfields, to acts of more real danger to themselves than to the public safety. If we are to believe the chief evidence in these transactions—John Castle, a man of the most disreputable character, who became a witness against the leading Spencean Philanthropists—they had murderous designs of sharp machines for destroying cavalry, and plans for suffocating quiet soldiers in their barracks, destroying them as boys burn wasps' nests; and schemes for taking the Tower, and barricading London Bridge, to prevent the artillery coming from Woolwich. And there were to be five commanders to effect all these great movements of strategy—Mr. Thistlewood, Mr. Watson the elder, and Mr. Watson the younger, Mr. Castle, and Mr. Preston, who came the last in dignity, 'because he was lame.' And then there was to be a committee of public safety, who were to be called together after the soldiers were subdued—twenty-four good and true men—amongst whom were 'Sir Francis Burdett, the lord mayor [Alderman Wood], Lord Cochrane, Mr. Hunt, Major Cartwright, Gale Jones, Roger O'Connor, one Squire Fawkes of Barnbury Grange in Yorkshire, a person of the name of Sam Brookes, Thompson on Holborn Hill, the two Evanses, Watson, and Thistlewood.' And then they calculated at what amount of public expence they could buy the soldiers, by giving them each a hundred guineas; and upon an accurate computation, it was found that the purchase-money would be somewhere about two millions, which would be nothing in comparison with the national debt, which would be wiped off.' With this preparation, if we may believe the very questionable evidence of Mr. Castle, a meeting was held at Spa-fields, on the 15th November. Thirty years ago, the district known as Spa-fields, now covered with dwellings of industry and comfortable residences of the middle classes, was a large unenclosed space; and a public-house was there, called by the mysterious name of Merlin's Cave; and Mr. Hunt

came in a chariot with the Watsons, and harangued a mob from the chariot-roof, attended with a flag and cockades, and 'everything handsome.' And after adjourning the meeting for a fortnight, Mr. Hunt and the chariot went away, drawn by the mob; and the mob running the chariot against a wall, they all got out and walked. So innocently passed the first Spa-fields meeting—innocently, save that at a dinner at Mr. Hunt's hotel in Bouverie Street, where, as he represented the matter, the Philanthropists thrust themselves upon him very much against his will—the betrayer Castle gave a toast, which is too infamous to be repeated here, and was threatened to be turned out of the room, but quietly remained, and went into what was described as 'a fox-sleep.'

But the 2nd December, the day to which the first meeting was adjourned, closed not so peaceably. Mr. Hunt came to town from Essex in his tandem, and, as he passed along Cheapside, at 'twenty minutes to one o'clock,' he was stopped by Mr. Castle, who was moving along with a considerable crowd; and the worthy man told him that the meeting had been broken up two hours, and they were going to the Tower, which had been in their possession for an hour. The country squire, to whom 'the boisterous hallooing of multitudes was more pleasing than the chinkling of the plough-traces, the bleating of lambs, or the song of the nightingale'—in these terms Cobbett defended his friend for his aspirations after mob popularity—was not weak enough to believe the tempter; and his tandem went on safely to Spa-fields, where the greatest number of people were collected together that he had ever beheld. But more active reformers were in Spa-fields before Mr. Hunt. The Spencean Philanthropists had provided a waggon for their own operations, and arrived on the ground considerably before the appointed hour of meeting, with banners and inscriptions, one of which was: 'The brave soldiers are our friends.' These men also brought arms and ammunition, which they deposited in their waggon. Mr. Watson the elder commenced a sufficiently violent address, and then his son followed him. The young madman, after declaiming against the uselessness of petition, cried out: 'If they

will not give us what we want, shall we not take it? Are you willing to take it? Will you go and take it? If I jump down amongst you, will you come and take it? Will you follow me?' And as at every question the encouraging 'Yes' became louder and louder, and put down the dissentient 'No,' he jumped from the waggon, seized a tri-coloured flag, and away rushed the mob to take the Tower. Two resolute men, the chief-clerk of Bow Street and a Bow Street officer, had the boldness to attack this mob, and destroyed one of their banners without any injury to themselves. The work of mischief necessarily went on. The young fanatic led his followers to the shop of Mr. Beckwith, a gunsmith on Snow Hill; and, rushing in, demanded arms. A gentleman in the shop remonstrated with him, and, without any pause, was immediately shot by him. Instantly, some compunction seems to have come over this furious leader, and he offered to examine the wounded man, saying he was himself a surgeon. The assassin was secured; but the mob, who destroyed and plundered the shop, soon released him, and proceeded along Cheapside, where they fired their recently acquired arms, like children with a new plaything. They marched through the Royal Exchange, where they were met by the lord mayor, and several were secured. The city magistrates on this occasion behaved with a firmness which admirably contrasted with the pusillanimity of their predecessors in the riots of 1780. The courage of the lord mayor and of Sir James Shaw is worthy of honourable record; and it shows not only the insignificancy of the so-called conspiracy, its want of coherence and of plan, but the real power of virtue in action to put down ordinary tumult. Sir James Shaw says: 'On the 2nd of December last I was at the Royal Exchange at half-past twelve; I saw the mob first in Cornhill; the lord mayor and I went in pursuit of them; they crossed the front of the Royal Exchange; we rushed through the Royal Exchange to take them in front on the other side: *the lord mayor and I*, having received information of prior occurrences, determined on putting them down. I seized several of them, and one flag of three colours, extended on a very long pole. I did not then perceive any arms. . . . The

lord mayor and I went to meet the mob with Mr. White and two constables; we got five constables in all; the whole party consisted of eight.'

Such is the way in which the beginnings of seditions ought to be met. Firmness such as this would have saved Bristol in 1832. After a further plunder of gunsmiths' shops in the Minories, and that summoning of the Tower by some redoubted and unknown champion, who, Bamford tells us, was Preston, the insurrection fell to pieces, altogether from the want of cohesion in the materials of which it was composed. The only blood shed was that of the gentleman in Mr. Beckwith's shop, who eventually recovered. An unfortunate sailor was convicted of the offence of plunder at the shop on Snow Hill, and was hanged. The younger Watson escaped from his pursuers.

The narrative which we have thus briefly given is taken from the facts recorded in the voluminous trial of the elder Watson, in the summer of 1817, on a charge of high treason connected with this Spa-fields meeting. This is not the place to notice the course of that trial, which ended in the acquittal of the prisoner; nor to anticipate the account of the legislative measures of the spring of 1817, which were mainly founded upon the reports of secret committees, in which this frantic riot was described as a most formidable organisation of 'desperate men, who calculated without reasonable ground upon defection in their opposers, and upon active support from those multitudes whose distresses they had witnessed, and whom they had vainly instigated to revolt.' The parliamentary reports speak of these transactions—in which a mighty government was to be overthrown, and a vast city, with its formidable array of police and soldiery, utterly subdued by five fanatics hounded on by a spy—with a solemnity which is now almost ludicrous. A few passages from the report of the secret committee of the Lords will suffice:

'A traitorous conspiracy has been formed in the metropolis for the purpose of overthrowing, by means of a general insurrection, the established government, laws, and constitution of this kingdom, and of effecting a

general plunder and division of property. . . . Various schemes were formed for this purpose. Amongst them was a general and forcible liberation of all persons confined in the different prisons in the metropolis. . . . It was also proposed to set fire to various barracks, and steps were taken to ascertain and prepare means for effecting this purpose. An attack upon the Tower and Bank, and other points of importance, was, after previous consultations, finally determined upon. Pikes and arms to a certain extent were actually provided, and leaders were named, among whom the points of attack were distributed. . . . It appears quite certain that the acts of plunder which were perpetrated for the purpose of procuring arms, and the other measures of open insurrection which followed, were not accidental or unpremeditated, but had been deliberately preconcerted as parts of a general plan of rebellion and revolution.'

Within a week after these occurrences the corporation of the city of London presented to the throne an address and petition from the lord mayor, aldermen, and commons, in which they set forth the 'grievances' of the country, and the necessity for parliamentary reform. The lord mayor was a decided political partisan, and the majority of the corporation held then what were called liberal opinions. But it is nevertheless pretty evident that if the events of the 2nd of December had been such as to produce real terror amongst the staid inhabitants of the city, this address would either not have been presented, or have been met by some counter-declaration of opinion.

In 1814 when the long revolutionary war appeared to be ended, and men's minds were in a fever of joy at the extraordinary triumphs that conducted the allied armies to Paris, the corporation of London went up with an address of congratulation to the prince-regent, in which they say: 'We cannot but look back with the highest admiration at the firmness, the wisdom, and the energy which have been exercised by our beloved country during this long and arduous struggle.' In 1816, the same corporation, in the address of complaint to the throne, says: 'Our grievances are the natural effect of rash and ruinous wars, unjustly commenced and pertinaciously

persisted in.' The inconsistencies of a large popular body are not to be examined too severely; the change of tone ought to have shown the government that it had its origin in some deep-rooted evil. The truth was, that the people—using the term in its largest sense—had ceased to sympathise with the government. In 1814, and indeed during the fiercest years of the contest with Napoleon, the people were borne along with the government by the irrepressible energy of our national character. The peace came, and the government, instead of marching at the head of the people from victory to victory, was engaged in a struggle with the people for the maintenance of the war-system of taxation and lavish expenditure, when the war-excitement was passed away. Corn-laws carried amidst riots—property-tax maintained for a season, and then wrested out of their hands—large military establishments continued—sinecures upheld and defended—reckless extravagance in the highest places—these were the things that the most sober and reasonable of the middle classes felt to constitute a cruel injustice—which those below them confounded with the sanative course of legislative and executive authority. The nation was defrauded of its reasonable expectations. The real danger, therefore, was not so much that the people should be irritated and misled by mob-leaders and unscrupulous writers, as that a general feeling should grow up in the nation, that government was a power antagonistic to the people—a power to be striven against as against a natural enemy—an oppressive and not a protective power—a power of separate and exclusive interests from the people—a power never to be trusted. We speak advisedly, and from experience, when we say that this was the general feeling of the great bulk of the industrious classes, long after the first sufferings that attended the transition state of peace had passed away. This was the feeling that was far more dangerous to the national interests than any insurrectionary outbreak of the masses of the working population. Deluded these masses unquestionably were—acted upon by demagogues. On the other hand, many amongst the upper and middle classes were alarmed into a prostrate adhesion to the menacing policy of the

government, and were ready with 'lives and fortunes' to put down the revolutionary spirit which they were assured was working under the guise of parliamentary reform. But, during all this unhappy time, the government had no love from any class—very little respect; intense hate from many—slavish fear from more. The government was denationalising the people. There was no confidence on either side. The wounds of the state during the last years of the regency were more severe than the wounds of war, and left deeper scars. The foundations of the state were loosened; there was no cohesion in the materials out of which the state was built up. The government took the fearful course of sowing distrust of the poor amongst the rich. The demagogues did their own counter-work of exciting hatred of the rich amongst the poor. It was a season of reciprocal distrust. 'Divide and govern' may be a safe maxim for subduing a faction; it is the most perilous principle for ruling a nation.

CHAPTER VI.

Algiers—Bombardment—Progress of Social Improvement.

The attack upon Algiers forms an episode in the history of the peace. This terrific assertion of the rights of civilised states, as opposed to barbarian violence and aggression, was, indeed, a consequence of the peace. The pirates of the Mediterranean were nourished in their lawless power by the jealousies of the maritime states of Europe; and England is perhaps not entirely free from the reproach which was raised against her, of having truckled to the insolent domination of Algiers and Tunis, that she might hold them, like ferocious beasts in her leash, ready to let slip upon her maritime enemies. War calls forth as many of the selfish as of the heroic passions. At any rate, the attitude which England assumed towards the Barbary states, at the termination of the war, was wholly different from that which she had maintained during many years, and under many governments,

whether in war or in peace. Our treaties with these states had been of longer standing than those with any other European power. The treaties with Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, date as far back as 1662. With the exception of one vigorous reprisal for an outrage upon the English flag in 1695, the greatest maritime country in the world had, for a century and a half, exchanged courtesies with the corsairs, who not only robbed upon the seas, but carried off the defenceless inhabitants of the Italian shores to the most fearful and hopeless slavery. With the full knowledge of the extent of these atrocities, we continued, up to the very end of the war, to treat these piratical governments with the respect due only to those states which submit to the law of nations. Lord Cochrane stated in parliament in 1816, that, three or four years before, the humiliating duty had been imposed upon him of carrying rich presents from our government to the Dey of Algiers; and it was even asserted, without contradiction, that a letter had been addressed to that chief pirate by the highest authority in our country. All this took place with the fullest conviction that the habits of the barbarian governments were wholly unchanged; that they were the same in the latter days of George III. as they were in the days of Charles II. 'Algiers,' says a writer of 1680, 'is a den of sturdy thieves formed into a body, by which, after a tumultuary sort, they govern, having the grand signior for their protector, who supplies them with native Turks for their soldiery, which is the greatest part of their militia; and they, in acknowledgment, lend him their ships when his affairs require it. They are grown a rich and powerful people, and, by a long practice of piracy, become good seamen; and, when pressed by our men of war, as of late we have experimented, they fight and defend themselves like brave men, inferior, I am persuaded, to no people whatever. They have no commerce, and so are without any taste of the benefits of peace; whence their life becomes a continual practice of robbery, and, like beasts of the desert, they only forbear to wrong where by fear, not honesty, they are deterred.'

And yet, however mean we may justly consider this

long course of our national policy towards the Barbary states, the annihilation of their predatory governments was not an easy task to be accomplished, nor a safe object to be pursued, even if it were for a time successful. These pirates of Africa started up three hundred years ago, under the sway of the Barbarossas, and presented at once to the governments of Europe the daring, revengeful, and cruel race that they so long remained—opposed to every people—often chastised and menaced with destruction, but rising unsubdued from the passing blow, ready for new deeds of outrage and desperation. A long experience had shown that although pledges of peace—the release of Christian slaves, and the renunciation of the future power of making slaves—might be extorted from these states by the burning of their ships and the destruction of their fortifications, they would not continue the less a government of robbers, returning to their old trade in utter want of all other means of existence, all other sources of importance, all other relations of confidence between the rulers and the people. It was clear that Algiers, especially, would not come within the pale of civilisation until it was revolutionised. England, which had just concluded a war against the aggrandisement of France, could not, with any consistency, have attempted to plant her laws and her language on the African shores of the Mediterranean; nor would she, with her experience of the difficulties of colonisation under the most favourable circumstances, have endeavoured, amidst the jealousies and possible hostilities of Europe, to amalgamate her own people with the barbarians of Northern Africa, and thus to found an orderly, a civilised, and a powerful nation. It would have been no common task there to change the habits of centuries; to plant useful industry in the soil where only destructive rapine had flourished; to connect the people with their rulers by salutary laws; and, hardest of all, to defer something to national habits and prejudices, whether in religion or in morals. The task has since been attempted by another great nation, not in the spirit of colonisation, but of conquest. It was our task, in 1816, to take neither course—content to succour the oppressed, and to humiliate the oppressor.

One day of dreadful occupation more,
Ere England's gallant ships
Shall, of their beauty, pomp, and power disrobed,
Like sea-birds on the sunny main,
Rock idly in the port.

One day of dreadful occupation more!
A work of righteousness,
Yea, of sublimest mercy, must be done!
England will break the oppressor's chain,
And set the captives free.

At the Congress of Vienna the aggressions of the Barbary states formed a natural subject of deliberation. An attempt was made by some enthusiasts to get up a European crusade against the infidel corsairs. It was perhaps fortunate that the congress had more pressing interests forced upon its attention. We were spared the fearful spectacle of Christianity girding on the sword of vengeance, to trample on the bleeding corse of an adverse faith. Civilisation was content to assert her rights without the dangerous admixture of religious zeal. In 1815 the government of the United States, whose ships had been plundered by the Algerines, captured a frigate and a brig belonging to the Dey, and obtained a compensation of sixty thousand dollars. It has been stated that this treaty saved the fleet of the Dey from attack in the harbour of Algiers—an enterprise which had been resolved upon by the government of the United States before the expedition of Lord Exmouth. In the spring of 1816, Lord Exmouth, with a squadron under his command, proceeded to Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, where he effected the release of seventeen hundred and ninety-two Christian slaves, and negotiated treaties of peace and amity on behalf of the minor powers in the Mediterranean. From Tunis and Tripoli a declaration was obtained that no Christian slaves should in future be made by either of these powers. The Dey of Algiers, however, refused to agree to the abolition of slavery without permission from the sultan. Lord Exmouth acceded to a suspension for three months of the Dey's decision; and returned to England with his fleet. One condition of the treaty with Algiers, then concluded by Lord Exmouth, was, that the

governments of Sicily and Sardinia should pay ransom for the release of their subjects; and, in point of fact, they did so pay, to the extent of nearly four hundred thousand dollars. This clause of the treaty was justly denounced in the British parliament, as an acknowledgment of the right of depredation exercised by the barbarians. In the debate on this occasion, Lord Cochrane maintained 'that two sail of the line would have been sufficient to compel the Dey of Algiers to accede to any terms. The city of Algiers was on the sea-shore, the water was deep enough for first-rates to come up to the very walls, and those were mounted only with a few pieces of cannon, with the use of which the barbarians were scarcely acquainted.' Lord Cochrane qualified this opinion in the subsequent session. It was fortunate that such an assertion was not the cause of an inadequate preparation and a fatal repulse. Lord Exmouth had his own observation for his guide. The event proved that the place, as well as the people, had remained unchanged during a long course of years. The city still preserved its ancient strength; the people, their accustomed daring and ferocity.

Lord Exmouth returned home from the Mediterranean in June 1816. It would appear that the great possibility of the refusal of the Dey of Algiers altogether to renounce the practice of making slaves, was not contemplated as a reason for hostile preparations. The fleet of Lord Exmouth was dismantled; the crews were paid off and disbanded. A sudden outrage, which occurred even before Lord Exmouth quitted the Mediterranean, but which did not then come to his knowledge, was the obvious cause of the change in the determination of our government. In 1806 we contracted with the Dey for the occupation of Bona, a town, with a capacious harbour, in the regency of Algiers, for the purpose of the coral-fishery being carried on under the protection of our flag. Here, on the 23rd of May, it being the season of the fishery, were assembled a great number of boats from the Italian shores, and as that day was the festival of the Ascension, the peaceful crews were preparing to hear mass; suddenly a gun was fired from the Algerine castle, and a large body of infantry and cavalry rushed upon the unfortunate fishers who had

landed, and fired upon those who remained within the harbour in their boats; the guns from the forts also joined in this fearful massacre. The British flag was torn down and trampled under-foot, and the house of our vice-consul was pillaged. It would appear that this was no concerted act of the Algerine government, but a sudden movement of fanaticism on the part of the licentious soldiery. Be this as it may, an expedition against Algiers was instantly determined upon by the British cabinet. A formidable fleet was equipped, with the least possible delay, at Portsmouth, and crews were collected from the different guard-ships, and volunteers invited to serve upon this particular enterprise. For once, a British fleet went to sea without recourse to the disgraceful practice of impressment. To render crews efficient, who were so hastily collected, and so unused to mutual operations, was a labour that required no common share of energy and prudence in the commander. With a part of his squadron, Lord Exmouth sailed to Plymouth, and finally left that port on the 28th of July, with a fleet consisting of twenty-five sail of large and small ships. At Gibraltar, the British admiral was joined by the Dutch admiral, Van Cappellan, with five frigates and a sloop, and having also received a reinforcement of gun-boats, he finally set sail for Algiers on the 14th. The winds being adverse, the fleet did not arrive in sight of Algiers till the 27th of August. During his course, Lord Exmouth spoke the British sloop *Prometheus*, which had been sent forward to bring off the British consul from Algiers: the family of our public officer had been rescued, but the consul himself had been put in chains. Here was a new insult to be avenged.

A most interesting and graphic narrative of the expedition to Algiers was published by Mr. Abraham Salamé, a native of Alexandria, who was taken out by Lord Exmouth to act as his interpreter. The description of a sea-fight, like the description of a shipwreck, is generally vague and unsatisfactory, unless we associate our interest with the fate of some one individual. Mr. Salamé was, at one and the same time, an actor and a spectator in this remarkable contest. At five o'clock on the morning of the 27th, as the fleet was nearing Algiers, Salamé put on an English dress

by the advice of Lord Exmouth, and was furnished with two letters, one for the Dey, the other for the British consul. The letter to the Dey demanded the entire abolition of Christian slavery; the delivery of all Christian slaves in the kingdom of Algiers; the restoration of all the money that had been paid for the redemption of slaves by the King of the Two Sicilies and the King of Sardinia; peace between Algiers and the Netherlands; and the immediate liberation of the British consul and two boats' crews who had been detained with him. The commander's letter to the consul of course contained an assurance that every effort should be made for his safety; but who, under such circumstances, could forget that when the French Admiral Duquesne, in 1682, bombarded Algiers, the Dey fastened the unhappy French consul to the mouth of a cannon, and blew him to atoms, in savage defiance of the hostile armament? At eleven o'clock the interpreter reached the mole in a boat bearing a flag of truce, and delivering his letters to the captain of the port, demanded an answer to the letter addressed to the Dey in one hour. The Algerine engaged that an answer, if answer were returned at all, should be given in two hours; and in the meantime the interpreter remained in a sufficiently uncomfortable situation, within pistol-shot of thousands of the people who were on the walls and batteries. He employed himself in observing the situation of the city, and the strength of the fortifications. His description of the place differs very little from that given by Joseph Pitts more than a century before. 'The houses,' says Pitts, 'are all over white, being flat, and covered with lime and sand as floors. The upper part of the town is not so broad as the lower part, and therefore at sea it looks just like the top-sail of a ship. It is a very strong place, and well fortified with castles and guns. There are seven castles without the walls, and two tiers of guns in most of them; but in the greatest castle, which is on the mole without the gate, there are three tiers of guns, many of them of an extraordinary length, carrying fifty, sixty—yea, eighty-pound shot. Besides all these castles, there is at the higher end of the town, within the walls, another castle with many guns. And, moreover, on many places towards

the sea are great guns planted. Algiers is well walled, and surrounded with a great trench. It hath five gates, and some of these have two, some three other gates within them; and some of them plated all over with thick iron. So that it is made strong and convenient for being what it is—a nest of pirates.'

The interpreter with his flag of truce waited for his answer from eleven o'clock till half-past two, but no answer came. During this time a breeze sprung up, the fleet advanced into the bay, and lay-to within half a mile of Algiers. The interpreter then hoisted the signal that no answer had been given, and the fleet immediately began to bear up, and every ship to take her position. Salamé reached the *Queen Charlotte*, Lord Exmouth's ship, in safety; but he candidly acknowledges, almost more dead than alive. Then he saw the change which comes over a brave and decided man at the moment when resolve passes into action. 'I was quite surprised to see how his lordship was altered from what I left him in the morning, for I knew his manner was in general very mild; and now he seemed to me *all-fightful*, as a fierce lion which had been chained in its cage and was set at liberty. With all that, his lordship's answer to me was: "Never mind, we shall see now;" and at the same time he turned towards the officers, saying; "Be ready!"' There is, perhaps, nothing in the history of warfare more terrific in its consequences than the first broadside that the British fired at Algiers. The *Queen Charlotte* passed through all the batteries without firing a gun, and took up a position within a hundred yards of the mole-head batteries. At the first shot, which was fired by the Algerines at the *Impregnable*, Lord Exmouth cried out: 'That will do; fire, my fine fellows!' The miserable Algerines, who were looking on, as at a show, with apparent indifference to the consequences, were swept away by hundreds by this first fire from the *Queen Charlotte*. 'There was a great crowd of people in every part, many of whom, after the first discharge, I saw running away under the walls like dogs, walking upon their feet and hands.'

From a quarter before three o'clock till nine, the most

tremendous firing on both sides continued without intermission, and the firing did not cease altogether until half-past eleven. During this engagement of nine hours, the allied fleet fired a hundred and eighteen tons of gunpowder, and five hundred tons of shot and shells. The Algerines exclaimed that hell had opened its mouth upon them through the English ships. That the Algerines had plied their instruments of destruction with no common alacrity is sufficiently shown by the fact, that eight hundred and fifty-two officers and men were killed in the British squadron, and sixty-five in the Dutch. Lord Exmouth himself says in his despatch: 'There were awful moments during the conflict which I cannot now attempt to describe, occasioned by firing the ships so near us.' Salamé says that one of the Algerine frigates which was in flames, drifted towards the *Queen Charlotte*, within about fifty feet of her; but a breeze springing up, carried the burning frigate towards the town. The Algerine batteries around Lord Exmouth's division were silenced about ten o'clock, and were in a complete state of ruin and dilapidation; but a fort at the upper angle of the city continued to annoy our ships, whose firing had almost ceased. This was the moment of the most serious danger to our fleet. Our means of attack were well-nigh expended; the upper batteries of the city could not be reached by our guns; the ships were becalmed. 'Providence at this interval,' says Lord Exmouth, 'gave to my anxious wishes the usual land wind, common in this bay, and my expectations were completed. We were all hands employed warping and towing off, and by the help of the light air the whole were under sail, and came to anchor out of reach of shells about two in the morning, after twelve hours' incessant labour.' There, when the ships had hauled out beyond the reach of danger, a sublime spectacle was presented to the wondering eyes of the interpreter, who had ventured out of the safety of the cockpit to the poop of the *Queen Charlotte*. Nine Algerine frigates and a number of gun-boats were burning within the bay; the store-houses within the mole were on fire; the blaze illumined all the bay, and showed the town and its

environs almost as clear as in the daytime; instead of walls the batteries presented nothing to the sight but heaps of rubbish; and out of these ruins the Moors and Turks were busily employed in dragging their dead. When the fleet had anchored, a storm arose—not so violent as the storm which here destroyed the mighty fleet of Charles V., and left his magnificent army, which had landed to subdue the barbarians, to perish by sword and famine—but a storm of thunder and lightning which filled up the measure of sublimity, at the close of the twelve awful hours of battle and slaughter.

It is unnecessary for us minutely to trace the progress of the subsequent negotiations with the humbled and sulky Dey. On the morning of the 28th, Lord Exmouth wrote a letter to this chief, who had himself fought with courage, in which the same terms of peace were offered as on the previous day. 'If you receive this offer as you ought, you will fire three guns,' wrote Lord Exmouth. The three guns were fired, the Dey made apologies, and treaties of peace and amity were finally signed, to be very soon again broken. The enduring triumph of this expedition was the release, within three days of the battle, of a thousand and eighty-three Christian slaves, who arrived from the interior, and who were immediately conveyed to their respective countries. 'When I arrived on shore,' says Salamé, 'it was the most pitiful sight to see all those poor creatures, in what a horrible state they were; but it is impossible to describe the joy and cheerfulness of them. When our boats came inside the mole, I wished to receive them (the slaves) from the captain of the port by number, but could not, because they directly began to push and throw themselves into the boats by crowds, ten or twenty persons together, so that it was impossible to count them: then I told him that we should make an exact list of them, in order to know to what number they amounted. It was, indeed, a most glorious and an ever-memorably merciful act for England, over all Europe, to see these poor slaves, when our boats were shoving with them off the shore, all at once take off their hats and exclaim in Italian: 'Viva il Ré d'Ingliterra, il' padre eterno! e 'l ammiraglio Inglese che ci ha liberato da questo secondo

inferno!'—Long live the King of England, the eternal father! and the English admiral who delivered us from this second hell!

Seldom hath victory given a joy like this—
When the delivered slave
Revisits once again his own dear home,
And tells of all his sufferings past,
And blesses Exmouth's name.

Far, far and wide, along the Italian shores
That holy joy extends;
Sardinian mothers pay their vows fulfilled;
And hymns are heard beside thy banks,
O Fountain Arethuse!

CHAPTER VII.

Criminal Laws—Police—Gaslight—Mendicity and Vagrancy—Law of Settlement—Administration of Poor-laws—Education—Savings' banks—Elgin Marbles.

Silent leges inter arma—the laws are silent in the midst of arms—said the great Roman orator. During our quarter of a century of war, the laws held on their course; but few had the courage to question the wisdom of that course, and still fewer the leisure to attend to any suggestions of improvement. The daring adventurer who then mounted the car of progress had to guide it, self-balanced, over the single rib of steel which spanned the wide gulf between the land of reality and the land of promise. Romilly was the foremost amongst the courageous spirits who risked something for the amelioration of the lot of their fellow-men. In 1516 Sir Thomas More wrote: 'I think it not right nor justice that the loss of money should cause the loss of man's life; for mine opinion is that all the goods in the world are not able to countervail man's life. But if they would thus say, that the breaking of justice, and the transgression of laws, is recompensed with this punishment, and not the loss of the money, then why may not this extreme and rigorous justice well be called plain in-

jury?' For so cruel governance, so straight rules, and unmerciful laws be not allowable, that if a small offence be committed, by and by the sword should be drawn; nor so stoical ordinances are to be borne withal, as to count all offences of such equality that the killing of a man, or the taking of his money from him, were both one matter.' In 1816 Sir Samuel Romilly carried a bill through the House of Commons, abolishing capital punishment for shoplifting, which had been rejected by that House three years before. The House of Lords, however, threw out this bill; and on that occasion, three hundred years after Sir Thomas More had proclaimed the opinion which we have just recited, Lord Ellenborough, the lord chief-justice, 'lamented that any attempts were made to change the established and well-known criminal law of the country, which had been found so well to answer the ends of justice.'

The history of the reform of our criminal law presents one of the most encouraging examples of the unconquerable success of the assertion of a right principle, when it is perseveringly advocated, and never suffered to sleep; and when, above all, the reformation is attempted step by step, and the prejudices of mankind are not assailed by the bolder course which appears to contemplate destruction and not repair. The name of reform in the criminal laws had not been heard in the House of Commons for fifty-eight years, when, in 1808, Romilly carried his bill for the abolition of the punishment of death for privately stealing from the person to the value of five shillings; in other words, for picking pockets. It is instructive to see how, through the force of the circumstances around him, Romilly approached the subject of this reform with a caution which now looks almost like weakness. His object was originally to raise the value according to which a theft was rendered capital. In January 1808, he gave up the intention of bringing forward even this limited measure—he was sure the judges would not approve of it. To another distinguished lawyer belongs the merit of having urged Romilly to a bolder policy. His friend Scarlett, he says, 'had advised me not to content myself with merely raising the amount of the value of property,

the stealing of which is to subject the offender to capital punishment, but to attempt at once to repeal all the statutes which punish with death mere thefts unaccompanied by any act of violence, or other circumstance of aggravation. This suggestion was very agreeable to me. But, as it appeared to me that I had no chance of being able to carry through the House a bill which was to expunge at once all these laws from the statute-book, I determined to attempt the repeal of them one by one; and to begin with the most odious of them, the act of Queen Elizabeth, which makes it a capital offence to steal privately from the person of another.' Upon this prudential principle Romilly carried his first reform in 1808. But the House of Commons, which consented to pass the bill, forced upon him the omission of its preamble: 'Whereas, the extreme severity of penal laws hath not been found effectual for the prevention of crimes; but, on the contrary, by increasing the difficulty of convicting offenders, in some cases affords them impunity, and in most cases renders their punishment extremely uncertain.' The temper with which too many persons of rank and influence received any project of amelioration at the beginning of this century, is forcibly exhibited in an anecdote which Romilly has preserved for our edification: 'If any person be desirous of having an adequate idea of the mischievous effects which have been produced in this country by the French Revolution and all its attendant horrors, he should attempt some legislative reform, on humane and liberal principles. He will then find, not only what a stupid dread of innovation, but what a savage spirit, it has infused into the minds of many of his countrymen. I have had several opportunities of observing this. It is but a few nights ago, that, while I was standing at the bar of the House of Commons, a young man, the brother of a peer, whose name is not worth setting down, came up to me, and breathing in my face the nauseous fumes of his undigested debauch, stammered out: "I am against your bill; I am for hanging all." I was confounded; and endeavouring to find out some excuse for him, I observed that "I supposed he meant that the certainty of punishment affording the only prospect of suppressing crimes, the

laws, whatever they were, ought to be executed." "No, no," he said; "it is not that. There is no good done by mercy. They only get worse; I would hang them all up at once."'

In 1810 Sir Samuel Romilly brought in three bills to repeal the acts which punished with death the crimes of stealing privately in a shop, goods of the value of five shillings, and of stealing to the amount of forty shillings in a dwelling-house, or on board vessels in navigable rivers. The first bill passed the House of Commons, but was lost in the Lords. The other two were rejected. In 1811 the rejected bills were again introduced, with a fourth bill abolishing the capital punishment for stealing in bleaching-grounds. The four bills were carried through the House of Commons; but only that on the subject of bleaching-grounds was sanctioned by the Lords. The constant argument that was employed on these occasions against the alteration of the law was this—that of late years the offences which they undertook to repress were greatly increased. Justly did Romilly say: 'A better reason than this for altering the law could hardly be given.' On the 24th of May 1811, when three of the bills were rejected in the House of Lords, Lord Ellenborough declared: 'They went to alter those laws which a century had proved to be necessary, and which were now to be overturned by speculation and modern philosophy.' The lord chancellor, Eldon, on the same occasion stated, that he had himself early in life felt a disposition to examine the principles on which our criminal code was framed, 'before observation and experience had matured his judgment. Since, however, he had learned to listen to these great teachers in this important science, his ideas had greatly changed, and he saw the wisdom of the principles and practice by which our criminal code was regulated.' In 1813 Sir Samuel Romilly's bill for the abolition of capital punishment in cases of shoplifting was carried by the Commons in the new parliament; but it was again rejected in the House of Lords. No further attempt was made towards the amelioration of this branch of our laws till the year 1816; which attempt we have now more particularly to record.

On the 16th of February, Sir Samuel Romilly obtained leave to bring in a bill repealing the act of William III., which made it a capital offence to steal privately in a shop to the value of five shillings. He described this act as the most severe and sanguinary in our statute-book; inconsistent with the spirit of the times in which we lived; and repugnant to the law of nature, which had no severer punishment to inflict upon the most atrocious of crimes. As recently as 1785, no less than ninety-seven persons were executed in London for this offence alone; and the dreadful spectacle was exhibited of twenty suffering at the same time. The capital sentence was now constantly evaded by juries committing a pious fraud, and finding the property of less value than was required by the statute. The consequence, if severe laws were never executed, was, that crime went on to increase, and the crimes of juvenile offenders especially. On moving the third reading of the bill, on the 15th of March, Sir Samuel Romilly called attention to the great number of persons of very tender age who had recently been sentenced to death for pilfering in shops. At that moment there was a child in Newgate, not ten years of age, under sentence of death for this offence; and the recorder of London was reported to have declared that it was intended to enforce the laws strictly in future, to interpose some check, if possible, to the increase of youthful depravity. The bill passed the Commons, but was thrown out in the Lords on the 22nd of May. On this occasion the lord chief-justice agreed with the lord chancellor, 'that the effect of removing the penalty of death from other crimes had rendered him still more averse to any new experiment of this kind. Since the removal of the vague terror which hung over the crime of stealing from the person, the number of offences of that kind had alarmingly increased. Though the punishment of death was seldom inflicted for crimes of this nature, yet the influence which the possibility of capital punishment had in the prevention of crimes could scarcely be estimated, except by those who had the experience in the operation of the criminal law which he had the misfortune to have. When it was considered that the protection of the property in all shops

depended on the act before them, and that even now thefts of that description were numerous, the House would not, he trusted, take measures to increase them.'

When we look back on the debates upon the criminal law, from 1809 to 1816, and see how little was asked by Romilly, and refused to him, compared with the amount of reform that has since been accomplished, we can only regard the arguments for the support of the ancient system of capricious terror, as the arguments of men slowly and painfully emerging from barbarism. When, in the time of Henry VI., more persons were executed in England in one year, for highway robbery, than the whole number executed in France in seven years; when, in the reign of Henry VIII., seventy-two thousand thieves were hanged, being at the rate of two thousand a year; and when, in the reign of George III., as we have seen, twenty persons were executed on the same morning in London, for privately stealing—we see the principle of unmitigated ferocity, the savagery which applies brute force as the one remedy for every evil, enshrined on the judgment-seat. The system went on till society was heart-sick at its atrocities, and then rose up the equivocating system which lord chancellors, and lord chief-justices, and doctors in moral philosophy, upheld as the perfection of human wisdom—the system of making the lightest as well as the most enormous offences capital, that the law might stand up as a scarecrow—an old, ragged, ill-contrived, and hideous maukin—that the smallest bird that habitually pilfered the fields of industry despised while he went on pilfering. With the absolute certainty of experience that bloody laws rigorously administered did not diminish crime, the legislators of the beginning of the nineteenth century believed, or affected to believe, that the same laws scarcely ever carried into execution would operate through the influence of what they called 'a vague terror.' As if any terror, as a preventive of crime or a motive to good, was ever vague. The system was entirely kept in existence by the incompetence and idleness of the law-makers and the law-administrators. A well-digested system of secondary punishments never seemed to them to be within the possibility of legislation. We are very far from the

solution of this great problem in our own days; but we have made some steps towards its attainment.

The revolting cruelty and the disgusting absurdity of our criminal laws, thirty years ago, were in perfect harmony with the system of police, which had then arrived at its perfection of imbecile wickedness. The machinery for the prevention and detection of crime was exactly accommodated to the machinery for its punishment. On the 3rd of April, on the motion of Mr. Bennet, a committee of the House of Commons was appointed to inquire into the state of the police of the metropolis. The committee was resumed in 1817; and two reports were presented, which were amongst the first causes of the awakening of the public mind to a sense of the frightful evils which were existing in what we flattered ourselves to be the most civilized city in the world. Twelve years after, a committee of the House of Commons thus described the police system of 1816 and 1817: 'If a foreign jurist had then examined the condition of the metropolis, as respected crime, and the organisation of its police—and if, without tracing the circumstances from which that organisation arose, he had inferred design from the ends to which it appeared to conduce—he might have brought forward plausible reasons for believing that it was craftily framed by a body of professional depredators, upon a calculation of the best means of obtaining from society, with security to themselves, the greatest quantity of plunder. He would have found the metropolis divided and subdivided into petty jurisdictions, each independent of every other, each having sufficiently distinct interests to engender perpetual jealousies and animosities, and being sufficiently free from any general control to prevent any intercommunity of reformation or any unity of action.' Another committee of the House of Commons, reporting in 1833, says of the same system; 'The police was roused into earnest action only as some flagrant violation of the public peace, or some deep injury to private individuals, impelled it into exertion; and security to persons and property was sought to be obtained, not by the activity and wholesome vigour of a preventive police, which it is a paramount duty of the state to provide, but by resorting from time to time, as an

occasional increase of the more violent breaches of the law demanded it, to the highest and ultimate penalties of that law, in the hope of checking the more desperate offenders.' The same report says; 'Flash-houses were then declared to be a necessary part of the police system, where known thieves, with the full knowledge of the magistrates and public officers, assembled; until the state, or individuals, from the losses they had sustained, or the wrongs they had suffered, bid high enough for their detection.'

Flash-houses, known in the scientific phraseology of the police as 'flash-cribs,' 'shades,' and 'infernals,' were filthy dens, where thieves and abandoned females were always to be found, riotous or drowsy, surrounded by children of all ages, qualifying for their degrees in the college of crime. 'There,' says a Middlesex magistrate, examined before the committee of 1816, 'they (the children) see thieves and thief-takers sitting and drinking together on terms of good-fellowship; all they see and hear is calculated to make them believe they may rob without fear of punishment; for in their thoughtless course they do not reflect that the forbearance of the officers will continue no longer than until they commit a forty-pound crime, when they will be sacrificed. A forty-pound crime!—the phraseology is as obsolete as if it were written in the pedler's French of the rogues of the sixteenth century. A forty-pound crime was a crime for whose detection the state adjudged a reward, to be paid on conviction, of forty pounds; and, as a necessary consequence, the whole race of thieves were fostered into a steady advance from small offences to great, till they gratefully ventured upon some deed of more than common atrocity, which should bestow the blood-money upon the officers of the law who had so long petted and protected them. The system received a fatal blow in 1816, in the detection of three officers of the police, who had actually conspired to induce five men to commit a burglary for the purpose of obtaining the rewards upon their conviction. The highwaymen who infested the suburbs of the metropolis had been eradicated —they belonged to another age. Offences against the person were very rarely connected with any offences

against property. But the uncertainty of punishment, the authorised toleration of small offenders, and the organised system of negotiation for the return of stolen property, had filled the metropolis with legions of experienced depredators. The public exhibitions of the most profligate indecency and brutality can scarcely be believed by those who have grown up in a different state of society. When Defoe described his Colonel Jack, in the days of his boyish initiation into vice, sleeping with other children amidst the kilns and glass-houses of the London fields, we read of a state of things that has long passed away; but, as recently as 1816, in Covent Garden Market, and other places affording a partial shelter, hundreds of men and women, boys and girls, assembled together, and continued during the night, in a state of shameless profligacy, which is described as presenting a scene of vice and tumult more atrocious than anything exhibited even by the lazzaroni of Naples.

The brilliantly lighted, carefully watched, safe, orderly, and tranquil London of the present day, presents as great a contrast to the London of 1816, as that again contrasted with the London of 1762—the year in which the Westminster paving and lighting act was passed. Street robberies, before that period, were the ordinary events of the night: security was the exception to the course of atrocity, for which the government applied no remedy but to hang. For half a century after this the metropolis had its comparative safety of feeble oil-lamps and decrepit watchmen. The streets were filled with tumultuous vagabonds; and the drowsy guardians of the night suffered every abomination to go on in lawless vigour, happy if their sleep were undisturbed by the midnight row of the drunken rake. In 1807 Pall-Mall was lighted by gas. The persevering German, who spent his own money and that of the subscribers to his scheme, had no reward. The original gas company, whose example was to be followed not only by all England, but the whole civilised world, were first derided, and then treated in parliament as rapacious monopolists intent upon the ruin of established industry. The adventurers in gaslight did more for the prevention of crime than the government had

done since the days of Alfred. We turn to the parliamentary debates, and we see how they were encouraged in 1816—nine years after it had been found that the invention was of unappreciable public benefit: 'The company,' said the Earl of Lauderdale, 'aimed at a monopoly, which would ultimately prove injurious to the public, and ruin that most important branch of trade, our whale-fisheries.' Alderman Atkins 'contended that the measure was calculated to ruin that hardy race of men, the persons employed in the Southern and Greenland whale-fisheries, in each of which a million of money and above a hundred ships were engaged. If the bill were to pass, it would throw out of employ ten thousand seamen, and above ten thousand rope-makers, sail-makers, mast-makers, &c., connected with that trade.' Who can forbear to admire the inexhaustible fund of benevolence that for ages has been at work in the advocacy of the great principle of protection? At every step of scientific discovery which promises to impart new benefits to mankind, however certain and unquestionable be the benefit, we are called upon to maintain the ancient state of things, amidst the terrible denunciations of ruin to some great interest or other. It is quite marvellous the ruin that has been threatening us since the peace, when capital has been free to apply itself in aid of skill and enterprise. The ruin that gaslight was to produce is a pretty fair example of the ruin that has gone on, and is still going on, for no objects but those of thinning our population, diminishing our manufactures, crippling our commerce, extinguishing our agriculture, and pauperising our landed proprietors. There never was a nation doomed to such perils by the restless character of its people. They will not let well-enough alone, as the only wise men say. In 1816 they risked the existence of the British navy, which depended upon the whale-fisheries, for the trifling advantage of making London as light by night as by day, and bestowing safety and peacefulness upon its million of inhabitants. And yet, at the very moment that this ruin was predicted to oil, it was admitted that we could not obtain a sufficiency of oil. There are some lessons yet to be learned on the subject of protection, even from this petty fight of oil and gas.

A committee of the House of Commons was appointed in 1815 to inquire into the state of mendicity and vagrancy in the metropolis and its neighbourhood; and they continued their sittings in 1816, reporting minutes of the evidence in each year. Beyond these reports no legislative measure was adopted. The evidence went rather to show the amount of imposture than of destitution. To collect such evidence was an amusing occupation for the idle mornings of members of parliament. To inquire into the causes of destitution and its remedies would have been a far heavier task. The chief tendency of the evidence was to show how the sturdy beggar was a capitalist and an epicure; ate fowls and beef-steaks for supper, and despised broken meat; had money in the funds, and left handsome legacies to his relations. The witnesses, moreover, had famous stories of a lame impostor who tied up his leg in a wooden frame, and a blind one who wrote letters in the evening for his unlettered brethren; of a widow who sat for ten years with twins who never grew bigger, and a wife who obtained clothes and money from eleven lying-in societies in the same year. But the committee had also some glimpses of real wretchedness amidst these exciting tales of beggar-craft—as old as the days of the old Abraham men. They heard of Calmel's Buildings, a small court of twenty-four houses in the immediate vicinity of Portman Square, where more than seven hundred Irish lived in the most complete distress and profligacy; and they were told that the court was totally neglected by the parish; that it was never cleaned; that people were afraid to enter it from dread of contagion. In George Yard, Whitechapel, they were informed that there were two thousand people, occupying forty houses, in a similar state of wretchedness. Much more of this was told the committee; but the evil was exhibited and forgotten. Very much of what was called the vagrancy of the metropolis was a natural consequence of the administration of the poor-laws throughout the kingdom. A large proportion of the money raised for the relief of the poor was expended in shifting the burden of their relief from one parish to another; and Middlesex kept a number of functionaries in active operation, to get rid of the vagrants

that crowded into London, by passing them out of the limits of the metropolitan county, to return, of course, on the first convenient occasion. The vagrants were dealt with 'as the act directs'—that is, they were committed to a house of correction for seven days, and then passed to their respective parishes, if they belonged to England; or carted to Bristol or Liverpool, if they were natives of Ireland. As Middlesex worked under the law of settlement, so worked the whole kingdom. This law of settlement was in full operation, playing its fantastic tricks from the Channel to the Tweed, when the peace filled the land with disbanded seamen and other servants of war; and agricultural labourers, who could find no employ at home, were wandering, as it was called, to search for capital, where capital was seeking for labour. The statute of 1662, the foundation of the law of settlement, forbade this wandering, and gave a very amusing explanation of the ground of its prohibitions: 'Whereas, by reason of some defects in the law, poor people are not restrained from going from one parish to another, and therefore do endeavour to settle themselves in those parishes where there is the best stock.' The great natural law of labour seeking exchange with capital, was to be resisted by a law which declared that those who sought to effect this exchange were 'rogues and vagabonds.' But still, in spite of statute upon statute, the labourers would wander, and 'endeavour to settle themselves in the parishes where there is the best stock;' and, the happy days being gone, never to return, when Poor Tom was 'whipped from tything to tything, and stocked, punished, and imprisoned,' the poor-law functionaries, in deference to the more merciful spirit of the age, employed a great portion of their time, and a larger portion of the public money, in carrying the labourers about from one end of the kingdom to the other, parcelling them out with the nicest adjustment amongst the fourteen thousand little divisions called parishes; and determining that, whatever circumstances existed in any one of these fourteen thousand divisions to make the presence of the labourers desirable or otherwise, they should go, and they should stay, where they had been born or apprenticed, or last lived for a year.'

The committee of the House of Commons on mendicity and vagrancy, in 1816, received evidence upon evidence of the extent of this transplantation of labourers, which set the whole country alive with the movements of vagrant carts without the slightest suspicion that there was something radically wrong at the foundation of a system which cost the rate-payers several millions annually in expenses of removal and of litigation, and with an indirect cost to the nation of many millions of profitable labour, which was destroyed by this constant exercise of the disturbing forces of ignorant legislation. After the peace, the clinging of parishes to the law of settlement became more monstrous than ever. 'Soon after the close of the war, when the agricultural labourers were increased by the disbanding of the army, and the demand for their labour was diminished from various causes, *agricultural parishes very generally came to the resolution of employing none but their own parishioners;* which ruined the industry of the country, and produced more individual misery than can be conceived by those who were not eye-witnesses: the immediate consequence of this determination was, the removal of numbers of the most industrious families from homes where they had lived in comfort, and without parish relief, all their lives, to a workhouse in the parish to which they belonged; and, without materially affecting the ultimate numbers in the respective parishes, the wretched objects of removal, instead of happy and contended labourers, became the miserable inmates of crowded workhouses, without the hope of ever returning to their former independence.'

On the 28th of May, Mr. Curwen, an intelligent agriculturist, brought the subject of the poor-laws before the House of Commons, on a motion for the appointment of a committee of inquiry. Mr. Curwen had a plan—as many others had their plans. His plan was to abolish the poor-rates, enacting 'that every individual who made any profit or advantage by his labour, should contribute towards a parish fund for the relief of sickness, age, or misfortune, for the encouragement of industry and good morals, for a general plan of education, and such other objects as might be conducive to the comforts and happiness of the labouring-classes; to which fund capitalists

and property should contribute.' Mr. Curwen had a theory that the extension of manufactures, having raised the average rate of wages, had produced general improvidence; that improvidence was the main cause of distress and poor-rates; and that to abridge the means of improvidence, by converting all the labouring population into fourteen thousand parochial friendly societies, was at once to establish the comfort and independence of all who had been so long degraded and demoralised by parish allowances. It is scarcely necessary for us to dwell upon the practical absurdity of this benevolent dream. The scheme of Mr. Curwen formed small part of the deliberations of the committee, which reported in 1817. Their recommendations for the remedy of the enormous evil of the existing poor-laws, did not penetrate beneath the surface. It may be desirable here to record what was the actual state of poor-law administration thirty years ago.

The system of poor-laws in England began, no doubt, in expediency. The gradual breaking up of feudal service and protection, the sudden dissolution of the monastic institutions, and the almost concurrent depreciation of the value of money consequent upon the discovery of America, produced an aggregate of misery which imperatively demanded a forced contribution from capital. The same laws which, justly and mercifully to a certain extent, required that casual misfortune should be relieved, also provided that 'the poor should be set to work.' The natural operations of demand and supply were here disturbed; the natural relations between profits and wages were interrupted; a fund was created for the labourers, which could not be distributed with reference to the amount of profitable labour; the fund for the support of profitable labour was therefore broken in upon; and, for three centuries, consequently, a struggle was going forward between the demands of want and the demands of industry. Circumstances, which arose almost within our own generation, went on, steadily breaking down the barriers which separated the two classes of claimants upon the labour-fund; and at the close of the war, with reference to the largest body of labourers, the agricultural, the distinction between the two classes of claimants had in great part ceased. The demands of want and the

demands of industry were confounded. The members of one class had insensibly slid into the other. 'The wages of idleness and vice, and the wages of industry and good conduct, were to be paid out of a common purse; and it is not therefore to be wondered at if the easier claim upon the wages had been generally preferred to the more laborious.

In 1816, the sum expended for the relief of the poor of England and Wales amounted to £5,724,839. The average annual expenditure had gradually increased from about two millions, at the commencement of the war, to six or seven millions at its close. A very large portion of the money that had been spent in fostering pauperism during the war years, by parish allowances in aid of wages, represents the amount of degradation and misery which the labourers endured, as compared with their unallowanced forefathers. The national debt represents, in a great degree, the money expended in unprofitable wars, the waste of capital upon objects that can only be justified by the last necessity, and which are the result of those evil passions which the improved knowledge and virtue of mankind may in time root out. In the same way, had the money expended upon fostering pauperism been raised upon loan, we should have had an amount of some two hundred millions, representing, in a like degree, the waste of capital expended in drying up the sources of industry and skill, and paying the alms of miserable indigence, instead of the wages of contented labour. It is difficult to conceive a more complete state of degradation than the allowanced labourers exhibited in 1816. With the feudal servitude had passed away the feudal protection. The parish-servitude imposed the miseries and contumelies of slavery, without its exemption from immediate care and future responsibility. So far were the agricultural labourers slaves, that, although they could not be actually sold, like 'villeins in gross,' their labour was put up by auction to the best bidder by parish authorities. 'The overseer calls a meeting on Saturday evenings, where he puts up each labourer by name to auction; and they have been let generally at from 1*s.* 6*d.* to 2*s.* per week, and their provisions; their families being supported by the parish.' When we regard the high

price of food in 1816, with the inability of many tenants to pay poor-rates, we can scarcely be surprised at these barbarous attempts to diminish the pressure of the allowance system. The whole adjustment of the social relations between the employer and the labourer, under this system, was founded upon injustice and oppression on one hand, and fraud and improvidence on the other. The farmer refused to employ the labourer till he had reduced him, by withholding the employment, to beggary; robbed the labourer of his fair wages, to dole out to him 'head-money,' not according to his worth, but his necessities; denied employ to the single labourer at all; discharged his best workman, with a small family, to take on the worst with a large family; and left his own land uncultivated, that a congregation of worthless idlers might be paid upon the pretence of working on the roads, while the independent labourer was marked as a fool for making any attempt to 'earn his bread by the sweat of his brow.' The authorities doled out their allowances upon the most partial and despotic system. The squire, the clergyman, and the farmer constituted themselves a tribunal for the suppression of vice and the encouragement of virtue, and they succeeded in producing either desperation or hypocrisy amongst the entire labouring population. If the junta was completed by the addition of a paid assistant-overseer, the discrimination was perfect. Squalid filth was the test of destitution, and whining gratitude, as it was called, for the alms distributed, was the test of character. If a labourer with a manly bearing came to the overseer, or to the vestry, to remove some sudden calamity—if he asked something to prevent him selling his bed—he was insulted. The agonised tear of wounded pride might start from the eye, and perhaps the groan of suppressed indignation escape from the lips. If the groan was heard, that man's 'character' was gone for ever. The pretence to discriminate between the good and the evil, did much worse for the community than occasional injustice. It led away parish functionaries from the real object of their appointment—to administer relief to the indigent—into the belief that they were the great patrons of the whole labouring population, who could never go

alone without their aid. They almost forced the condition of pauperism upon the entire working community, by their beautiful system of rewards and punishments. They forgot that it was their business to give relief to destitution, and to destitution only; and so they established every sort of false test of relief.

The old workhouse system was as productive of evil in principle, though not in amount, as the allowance system. The wretchedness of the parish workhouse, in consequence of bad management, and the want of order and classification, had become a prominent feature in pictures of English society. Seldom under any control, the workhouses afforded abundant proofs of neglect and want of feeling on the part of those who had the management of them. The workhouse master, who, probably, contracted for the paupers at a certain rate per head, endeavoured to remunerate himself for the hardness of his bargain by disposing of the services of the inmates to the neighbouring farmers. Abuses had so long existed, that they excited no remark. No means were taken to educate the children; no classification took place between the able-bodied; but persons of both sexes, the aged and the young, the sick and the lunatic, were huddled promiscuously together. Such was the state of most workhouses in the rural districts. Many of the London parishes farmed their poor—that is, they contracted with individuals to maintain them at a certain rate per head. They were wretchedly lodged, without comfort or decency; ill-fed; allowed the use of ardent spirits, and encouraged to obtain them, by being suffered to wander abroad without restraint, to swell the numbers of metropolitan mendicants. In the parish workhouses the consequences of want of classification and bad management operated with the greatest hardship upon children. Habits were formed in the workhouse which rendered the path to respectability almost inaccessible. These children were disposed of under the apprenticing system, and were doomed to a dreary period of servitude, under some needy master, who had been tempted in the first instance to take them by the offer of a small premium. The parochial plan of putting out children, with its attendant evils, was a necessary consequence of the want of training while in

the workhouse. If these children had received useful instruction, and been brought up in habits of order and industry, their compulsory distribution among the different rate-payers would have been unnecessary, as each child would have been as valuable to its master as the children taken from the independent cottager. Even in those workhouses where attempts were made to conduct them according to the statute (43rd of Elizabeth), directing that the fund for the relief of the poor should be employed in setting them to work in the poorhouse or workhouse, there were necessarily the grossest mistakes and mismanagement. In some of these houses manufacturing operations were carried on; and in others land was rented, and the inmates were employed in agricultural labour. Interests which never prosper but in the hands of private individuals, were expected to become productive; notwithstanding the great majority of persons concerned were necessarily impelled to foster abuses out of which they could advance their own personal profit. The trades usually pursued were sack, linen, or cloth factories, or the manufacture of nets. The profits of the private dealer and the wages of the independent workmen were liable to unjust depreciation, for the operations of the houses of industry were not regulated by the extent of the demand, but would be most active when the markets were glutted. Workmen left the private factory because there was a superabundant supply of the article which they were engaged in producing, and they entered into the house of industry to add still further to the overstocking of the market. The balance by which the healthy state of the demand and supply could be regulated was destroyed. There is no balance which can be held between the funds for the maintenance of labour and the number of the labourers, but through the uncontrolled exchange of capital and labour, each operating with perfect freedom and perfect security. Whenever the scales are held by any other power than the natural power of exchange—whenever there is a forced demand for labour produced by a forced supply of capital—the natural proportions of capital and labour are destroyed by a forced addition to the number of labourers. All schemes for 'setting the

poor to work' by unnatural encouragements to labour, assume that 'the poor' is a constant quantity; the unnatural encouragement produces more poor, and the funds that have been diverted from the regular labour-market are devoured in an accelerated ratio.

The poor-law, as it existed in full vigour at the close of the war, went further than any other human device for diminishing the funds for the maintenance of labour, and at the same time increasing the number of labourers. Rewards for illegitimate children, rewards for children under improvident marriages, sustenance for the pauper child from the hour he was born, increased sustenance as he grew, a large and liberal allowance for him when he prematurely married another pauper; and the same round again, till the next pauper generation was quadrupled in number. If these laws, intrusted as they were in their application to narrow-minded, short-sighted and selfish individuals, had been imposed upon us by some dominant enemy, for the destruction of our best interests, they could not have more effectually answered such an end. They did two things which must produce misery and crime, and would have produced eventual anarchy, unless their progress had been arrested—they destroyed the labour-fund, and they increased the number of the labourers. They bestowed on unproductive consumers the bread which they took out of the mouths of the profitable labourers; and they, one by one, ground down the profitable labourers to the grade of unproductive consumers. Under these laws, no one was secure, and no one was happy. The labourers, for whose especial benefit they were alleged to be upheld, were the most insecure and the most unhappy. The dream of Pharaoh, that 'seven lean and ill-favoured kine did eat up seven fat kine; and when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them, but they were still ill-favoured as at the beginning,' was realised by the labourers of England under the old poor-laws.

In 1807 Mr. Whitbread proposed to the House of Commons a very large and comprehensive measure of poor-law reform. The principles which he advocated were those of real statesmanship. To arrest the constant progress of pauperism, he desired to raise the character of the

labouring-classes. He called upon the country to support a plan of general national education; he proposed a method under which the savings of the poor might be properly invested in a great national bank. The last object has been fully accomplished. How little has the government done for the other object during forty years! At the period when Mr. Whitbread brought forward his plan of poor-law reform, the system of mutual instruction, introduced by Lancaster and Bell, was attracting great attention. Too much importance was perhaps at first attached to the mechanical means of education then recently developed; but the influence was favourable to the establishment of schools by societies and individuals. The government left the instruction of the people to go on as it might, without a single grant for more than a quarter of a century. It was in vain that, in 1807, Whitbread proclaimed the important truth, that nothing can possibly afford greater stability to a popular government than the education of its people. 'Contemplate ignorance in the hand of craft—what a desperate weapon does it afford! How impotent does craft become before an instructed and enlightened multitude!' Again: 'In the adoption of the system of education, I foresee an enlightened peasantry, frugal, industrious, sober, orderly, and contented; because they are acquainted with the true value of frugality, sobriety, industry, and order. Crimes diminishing, because the enlightened understanding abhors crime. The practice of Christianity prevailing, because the mass of your population can read, comprehend, and feel its divine origin, and the beauty of the doctrines which it inculcates. Your kingdom safe from the insults of the enemy, because every man knows the worth of that which he is called upon to defend.' Did Whitbread take one legislative step in advance by the enunciation of these truths? He was treated as a benevolent visionary; and every particle of his poor-law reform, and especially his plans for instruction and the investment of savings, were sneered away, whilst ministers and magistrates went on in the usual course of keeping the great body of the people ignorant, dependent, and wretched. A man of talent, Mr. Windham, put himself at the head of the advocates for keeping the

people from the perils of instruction: 'His friend, Dr. Johnson, was of opinion that it was not right to teach reading beyond a certain extent in society. The danger was, that if the teachers of the good and the propagators of bad principles were to be candidates for the control of mankind, the latter would be likely to be too successful. . . . . The increase of this sort of introduction to knowledge would only tend to make the people study politics, and lay them open to the arts of designing men.' This miserable logic answered its end for a season. Education was held to be dangerous—at least in England. In Ireland, the government encouraged education. In 1816, Mr. Peel, as secretary for Ireland, maintained that 'it was the peculiar duty of a government that felt the inconvenience that arose from the ignorance of the present generation, to sow the seeds of knowledge in the generation that was to succeed.' The natural connection between ignorance and poverty was never more clearly put, at a very early period of discussing such questions, than by the present excellent Bishop of Chester: 'Ignorance is not the inevitable lot of the majority of our community; and with ignorance a host of evils disappear. Of all obstacles to improvement, ignorance is the most formidable, because the only true secret of assisting the poor is to make them agents in bettering their own condition, and to supply them, not with a temporary stimulus, but with a permanent energy. As fast as the standard of intelligence is raised, the poor become more and more able to co-operate in any plan proposed for their advantage, more likely to listen to any reasonable suggestion, more able to understand, and therefore more willing to pursue it. Hence it follows, that when gross ignorance is once removed, and right principles are introduced, a great advantage has been already gained against squalid poverty. Many avenues to an improved condition are opened to one whose faculties are enlarged and exercised; he sees his own interest more clearly, he pursues it more steadily; he does not study immediate gratification at the expense of bitter and late repentance, or mortgage the labour of his future life without an adequate return. Indigence, therefore, will rarely be found in company with good education.'

From 1807 to the close of the war, the legislature heard no word on the education of the people. On the 21st May 1816, Mr. Brougham moved for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the state of the education of the lower orders of the people in London, Westminster, and Southwark. The motion, which was brought forward with great caution by the mover, was unopposed. The committee made its first report on the 20th June, having conducted its inquiries with more than usual activity. The energy of Mr. Brougham, who acted as chairman, gave a remarkable impulse to this important investigation. It was found that in the metropolis there were a hundred and twenty thousand children without the means of education. On presenting this report, Mr. Brougham informed the House that the committee had comprehended in their objects inquiries concerning the management of the higher schools, such as the Charterhouse, Christ's Hospital, and Westminster; the funds of such schools being originally destined for the use of the poor. The principal labours of the committee had, however, consisted in their examination of evidence as to the number and condition of the charity and parish schools destined for the education of the lower orders. The number of such institutions exceeded anything that could have been previously believed; but the expenditure of the funds was, in many cases, neither pure nor judicious. A few were educated and brought up—the many were neglected. In the country he had heard of instances of flagrant abuses. Mr. Brougham's report produced no hostile feelings on this occasion. Lord Castlereagh acknowledged that abuses existed in many charities for the purposes of education, and recommended the exercise of a vigilant superintendence of their administration. In 1817 the committee was revived, but was adjourned in consequence of the illness of the chairman; but in 1818 it was again appointed, with powers of inquiry no longer confined to the metropolis. Then the larger question of the extension of education was merged in a furious controversy as to the amount of abuses in endowed charities, and the propriety of subjecting the higher schools, such as Eton and Winchester, and also colleges in the universities, to a searching inquiry into

the nature of their statutes, and their adherence to the objects of their foundation. An act was subsequently passed, in consequence of the labours of the committee, to appoint commissioners to inquire concerning the abuse of charities connected with education; and by a second act the right of inquiry was extended to all charities, the universities and certain great foundation schools excepted. The education commission was thus merged in the charity commission. Of the great national benefits that resulted from that commission no one can doubt. But it may be doubted whether the controversial shape which the question of education thus assumed, in 1818, did much to advance the disposition to provide a general system of popular instruction which prevailed in 1816. When Mr. Brougham first obtained his committee, he said, 'his proposition was, that a measure for the education of the poor under parliamentary sanction, and on parliamentary aid, should be tried in London; for without a previous experiment he should not deem it proper to bring forward any general measure. But if the experiment should be found to succeed in London, he would then recommend the extension of the plan to other great towns.' This plan was never carried out, nor further proposed. When Mr. Brougham presented his first report, there was unanimity and even cordiality in its reception by the House of Commons. Mr. Canning declared that 'he should contribute all his assistance to the object of the report, satisfied that the foundation of good order in society was good morals, and that the foundation of good morals was education.'.

What was the temper of the House and of the country in 1818 is strikingly exhibited in a speech of Mr. Brougham's in 1835: 'In the year 1818 the labours of the education committee of the House of Commons—labours to which no man can attach too high a value—were made the subject of great controversy; a controversy as fierce and uncompromising as almost any that ever raged, and to which I only refer as affording another reason for the hope I so fondly cherish, that though now, perhaps, in a minority upon this, as upon many other questions here debated, I yet may ultimately find myself with scarcely an antagonist. That bitter controversy is at an end—the

heats which it kindled are extinguished—the matter that engendered those heats finds equal acceptance with all parties. Those are now still, or assenting, or even supporting me, who then thought that I was sowing broadcast the seeds of revolution, and who scrupled not to accuse me as aiming at the "dictatorship," by undermining the foundations of all property. Those who once held that the education committee was pulling down the church, by pulling down the universities and the great schools—that my only design could be to raise some strange edifice of power upon the ruins of all our institutions, ecclesiastical and civil—have long ceased to utter even a whisper against whatever was then accomplished and have become my active coadjutors ever since. Nay, the very history of that fierce contention is forgotten. There are few now aware of a controversy having ever existed, which, a few years back, agitated all men all over the country; and the measures I then propounded among revilings and execrations, have long since become the law of the land. I doubt whether, at this moment, there are above some half-dozen of your lordships who recollect anything about a warfare which for months raged with unabated fury, both within the walls of the universities and without—which seemed to absorb all men's attention, and to make one class apprehend the utter destruction of our political system, while it filled others with alarm lest a stop should be put to the advancement of the human mind. That all those violent animosities should have passed away, and that all those alarms be now sunk in oblivion, affords a memorable instance of the strange aberrations—I will not say of public opinion, but—of party feeling, in which the history of controversy so largely abounds. I have chiefly dwelt upon it to show why I again trust that I may outlive the storms which still are gathering round those who devote themselves rather to the improvement of their fellow-creatures than the service of a faction.' From some unhappy prejudice, from apathy, or from cowardice, the education of the people made small legislative progress for twenty years. Perhaps the old fable of the sun and the wind, experimenting upon the removal of the traveller's cloak, may afford us some solution of this

problem. But the reports of the education committee were of the highest value in showing us the extent of instruction at the time of its labours. There were 18,500 schools, educating 644,000 children; of this number 166,000 were educated at endowed schools, and 478,000 at unendowed schools, during six days of the week. This number was independent of Sunday-schools, of which there were 5100, attended by 452,000 children; but, of course many of these Sunday-scholars were included in the returns of other schools.

In the plan of poor-law reform brought forward by Mr. Whitbread in 1807, he earnestly advocated the consideration of a mode by which the savings of the poor might be safely and profitably invested: 'I would propose the establishment of one great national institution, in the nature of a bank, for the use and advantage of the labouring classes alone; that it should be placed in the metropolis, and be under the control and management of proper persons, to be appointed according to the provisions contained in the bill I shall move for leave to introduce; that every man who shall be certified by one justice, to his own knowledge, or on proof, to subsist principally or alone by the wages of his labour, shall be at liberty to remit to the accountant of the poor's fund—as I would designate it—in notes or cash, any sum from 20*s.* upwards; but not exceeding £20 in any one year, nor more in the whole than £200. That once in every week the remittances of the preceding week be laid out in the 3 per cent. consolidated bank annuities, or in some other of the government stocks, in the name of commissioners to be appointed; to avoid all minute payments, no dividend to be remitted till it shall amount to 10*s.*; and that all fractional sums under 10*s.* be from time to time reinvested, in order to be rendered productive towards the expenses of the office.' Three or four years previous, Mr. Malthus, in his *Essay on Population*, had argued that 'it might be extremely useful to have county-banks, where the smallest sums would be received, and a fair interest granted for them.' Mr. George Rose had, as early as 1793, legislated for the encouragement of friendly societies. In 1798 a bank for the earnings of poor children was established at Tottenham;

and this was found so successful, that a bank for the safe deposit of the savings of servants, labourers, and others, was opened at the same place in 1804. Interest was here allowed to the depositors. A similar institution was founded at Bath in 1808. But the greatest experiment upon the possibility of the labouring poor making considerable savings was tried in Scotland. 'The Parish Bank Friendly Society of Ruthwell,' was established by the Rev. Henry Duncan in 1810. The first London savings bank did not commence its operations till January 1816. In the parliamentary session of 1816, Mr. Rose brought in a bill for the regulation of savings-banks, which was subsequently withdrawn for revision. Of the possible benefits of these institutions there could be no doubt in the minds of all men who were anxious to improve the condition of the people. Writers of opposite parties agreed in this matter: 'Savings-banks are spreading rapidly through Scotland; and we expect soon to hear the like good tidings from England, where such an institution is of still greater importance. It would be difficult, we fear, to convince either the people or their rulers that such an event is of far more importance, and far more likely to increase the happiness, and even the greatness of the nation, than the most brilliant success of its arms, or the most stupendous improvements of its trade or its agriculture. And yet we are persuaded that it is so.' Again: 'They to whom this subject is indifferent may censure our minuteness; but those who, like us, regard it as marking an era in political economy, and as intimately connected with the external comfort and moral improvement of mankind, will be gratified to trace the rise and progress of one of the simplest and most efficient plans which has ever been devised for effecting these invaluable purposes.' The language of the real philanthropist, whatever be his party, may be easily distinguished from the language of the demagogue: 'What a bubble! At a time when it is notorious that one half of the whole nation are in a state little short of starvation; when it is notorious that hundreds of thousands of families do not know when they rise, where they are to find a meal during the day; when the far greater part of the whole people, much more

than half of them, are paupers; at such a time to bring forth a project for collecting the *savings* of journeymen and labourers, in order to be *lent to the government* and to form a fund for the support of the lenders in sickness and old age!' The most sanguine expectations of the promoters of savings-banks could scarcely have anticipated that, within less than thirty years, the number of institutions in existence would amount to 577 in the United Kingdom; that the total number of existing depositors would be 1,012,475; that they would possess an aggregate of property amounting to £31,275,636; and that the whole number of depositors would have received interest amounting to £16,254,109.*

There is one other measure of social improvement from which we cannot withhold a slight notice. In 1816 the House of Commons passed a vote for the purchase of the Elgin Marbles, for the sum of £35,000. This was the first step that the British legislature had made in the encouragement of the fine arts. It was a step in the education of the people. Mr. Croker, who, as it appears to us, was far in advance of his time on this subject, truly and eloquently said what cannot be too often repeated in the consideration of such questions: 'The House had been warned, in the present circumstances of the country, not to incur a heavy expense merely to acquire works of ornament. But who was to pay this expense, and for whose use was the purchase intended? The bargain was for the benefit of the public, for the honour of the nation, for the promotion of national arts, for the use of the national artists, and even for the advantage of our manufactures; the excellence of which depended on the progress of the arts in the country. It was singular that when, two thousand five hundred years ago, Pericles was adorning Athens with those very works, some of which we are now about to acquire, the same cry of economy was raised against him, and the same answer that he then gave might be repeated now; that it was money spent for the use of the people, for the encouragement of arts, the in-

* This return is from August 1817 to November 1844. The number of banks and depositors, and amount of deposits, have been much increased since the making up of the return.

crease of manufactures, the prosperity of trades, and the encouragement of industry; not merely to please the eye of the man of taste, but to create, to stimulate, to guide the exertions of the artist, the mechanic, and even the labourer, and to spread through all the branches of society a spirit of improvement, and the means of a sober and industrious affluence.' Slowly, indeed, have these great principles progressed—but they have progressed.

CHAPTER VIII.

Spanish America—Colonial Misgovernment—General Miranda—Mr. Pitt—The Addington Cabinet—The Grenville Cabinet—The Portland Cabinet—The Perceval Cabinet—Improvement of Brazil—Difficulties of the Spanish Provincials—Mexico—New Grenada—Venezuela—Earthquake at Caracas—Rio de la Plata—Paraguay—Chili—Position of Affairs in 1816.

A BRIEF sketch must here be given of the Spanish colonies in South America—of their condition and prospects. If it is asked why must we stop to review the colonial affairs of another kingdom?—the answer is, that England had, at this time, as much interest in the colonies of Spain, as Spain and France had, forty years before, in the condition and prospects of her North American colonies. The powers of Europe were to be coerced or supported, punished or aided, by action upon their possessions beyond the Atlantic. We find, accordingly, that through a long succession of administrations, the movements of Spanish America were watched and discussed, with deep interest, in the British cabinet.

The Spanish possessions in America were at first divided into two viceroyalties—that of Mexico in the northern, and that of Peru in the southern continent. In course of time, two more viceroyalties were detached from the southern portions—those of New Granada and Rio de la Plata; and then again, five smaller provinces were parted off, under the name of captain-generalships. While Brazil, now belonging to Portugal, had once been jointly held by Spain; while some West India islands were

changing hands, according to the chances of war; while the British colonies were establishing their own independence; and while Florida and Louisiana were transferred by purchase or negotiation from one crown to another, it was hardly possible that the Spanish colonies should not have ideas and feelings about their own position, and originate movements accordingly.

The first stir was in 1750, when Venezuela revolted against Spain. For the next forty years, risings became more frequent, and almost every province rebelled once or oftener. The inhabitants suffered under gross misgovernment. There were three classes of them: the natives, the Spaniards, and the mixed race which always grows up under such circumstances. Those born in the colonies, even of European blood, were, though legally entitled to all the privileges of citizenship, depressed and insulted by the mother-country, and the official persons she sent out. The European officials not only engrossed all the dignities and salaries of the colonies, but vexed and despoiled the inhabitants by oppressive customs, audacious self-seeking, and malpractices, against which no complaint was listened to. Though insulated colonial risings are of no immediate avail, a sufficient number of them is sure to suggest ideas of national independence. Such suggestions were spoken into the ear of Mr. Pitt in 1790, by a man who had much to say of the natural advantages of his country beyond the Atlantic, and of the benefits to Great Britain, if the South American continent were enabled to develop its resources, and become the home of a rising nation.

General Miranda, a native of Caracas, in Venezuela, was born about the time when the revolt, mentioned above, took place. His mind was early occupied with the ideas naturally generated by that revolt. He witnessed, in personal presence, a part of the war by which the British provinces became the United States; and he made it the aim of his life to obtain a similar emancipation for the Spanish colonies. He made no secret of his purpose. In the London *Political Herald* of 1785, there is a notice of Miranda being in town, in pursuit of his object—the deliverance of his country. In 1790, when there was a

dispute between England and Spain about Nootka Sound, Miranda obtained access to Mr. Pitt, and spread before him the picture of what the great continent was, and could do. It was larger than Europe; it was more fertile, naturally, than Europe; it possessed the little isthmus which, cut through, would open to the merchant-ships of Europe the vast regions of the Pacific, saving them the long sweep towards the South Pole, which they must make to round Cape Horn or the Cape of Good Hope; it was veined with vast navigable rivers, which would bring to the coast the produce of the plains; and the prodigious backbone of mountains enclosed treasures of ore. As for the people, they were ignorant, debased, quarrelsome, at present; but independence would ennoble them, and gratitude would bind them in eternal alliance with the country which should aid them to obtain independence. So said Miranda to Mr. Pitt. Perhaps the minister saw more clearly than the applicant, that the popular faults he admitted, however corrigible by independence, were sadly in the way of obtaining it. England did not then undertake the business. Mr. Pitt thought well of the project, and promised to proceed in it if Spain should be obstinate about Nootka Sound. Spain yielded; and Mr. Pitt then told Miranda that his scheme should not be lost sight of. He added, what proved to be very true, that it 'would infallibly engage the attention of every minister of this country.'

In 1797, when England became possessed of Trinidad, Mr. Pitt remembered Miranda and his measure. Our governor of Trinidad encouraged the inhabitants of the Spanish colonies to rise, relying on aid from Great Britain, to be given without any other aim than enabling the colonies to achieve their own independence. In the next year, Miranda came to London from France, to lay his plans before the British government. His plans were, that England, the United States, and the Spanish provincials, should form an alliance to rescue the colonies from Spain. Great Britain was to furnish money and ships, for which she was to be hereafter repaid in the sum of £30,000,000; and the United States were to supply 10,000 men. Mr. Pitt agreed; and the plan waited only

for the acquiescence of the United States. President Adams demurred and delayed; but the scheme was not given up; and we find it laid afresh before the Addington administration in 1801.

Within this cabinet, the schemes of government for the new states were discussed, and the military movements arranged for the outbreak, when the Peace of Amiens again suspended the subject. When war broke out afresh, and it was seen that Spain would go with France, the preparations were resumed, now once more under Mr. Pitt. Lord Melville and Sir Home Popham were in full communication with Miranda, when the third coalition, on which Mr. Pitt staked the last hopes of his hopeful life, was formed; and it was confidently expected that Napoleon would be put down from that quarter. The secret of the American enterprise had oozed out before this time. It, no doubt, gave Napoleon a new hold on the Spanish Bourbons. It was discussed in both their courts; and also among the allies, now gathering in Germany. Miranda proceeded to the United States, to organise there his revolutionary plans, in full reliance on British aid from Trinidad. This aid he received, in the form of ships of war and small vessels, which were to support him in an invading expedition; but suddenly, in the summer of 1806, he was warned to expect no more active assistance, but only protection from the enemy. The reason of this change was that Mr. Pitt was dead, and Lord Grenville in power.

It appears remarkable that the Tory governments, which had regarded with no good-will the independence of the United States, should be the supporters of the revolutionary party in South America, and soon afterwards in Spain; while the Whigs were those who disappointed Miranda, and groaned over the Peninsular war as dolefully as over the American war of 1812. It was said at the time that it was at the desire of Russia that Fox drew back from the South American cause. However that might be, all the party prepossessions of the Whigs were against the cause of independence. They had seen South America played off against the North in our American war; and they had seen Pitt plant his hopes on the South American

provinces in the continental war which they disapproved. So, as soon as the Grenville ministry came into power, it looked coldly on the protégés of its predecessors.

If the Grenville ministry would not help South America to free itself, it contemplated the subjugation of that continent. Sir Home Popham's expedition from the Cape against Buenos Ayres was, as has been related, his own scheme altogether. He could plead no authorisation from the government at home. But, as we have seen, the government at home adopted his scheme, and proceeded upon his beginnings. We remember Sir S. Auchmuty's expedition to Monte Video, and General Crawfurd's to Chili; the last being turned from its track to afford aid to the unhappy General Whitelocke in his attack on Buenos Ayres. We have a letter from Mr. Windham, then secretary at war—a 'most secret' letter to General Crawfurd—which desires that officer to keep down, by all means whatever, the insurrectionary spirit in the South American provinces, and to preserve the old methods of government, merely transferring the allegiance and obedience of the people from the King of Spain to the King of Great Britain. Mr. Windham and his colleagues left, as one of their disastrous bequests, the Buenos Ayres expedition; and the next cabinet was that of the Duke of Portland.

The Portland cabinet recurred to the Pitt and Addington policy. Every effort was made, that so weak a government could make, to afford assistance to the South American patriots. It is believed that, when the harbour of Cork was filling with transports, in the summer of 1808, and when Sir Arthur Wellesley was preparing for foreign service, everybody was looking across the Atlantic for the battle-field. To Sir Arthur's Indian wars would now have succeeded American victories, if the sudden uprising of Spain against Napoleon had not called the British general and his forces to the Peninsula. If Wellesley had gone to South America, the independence of the colonies there would have presently followed; but they were far from being forsaken, or from feeling themselves left in the lurch, by the scene of the struggle being fixed in Europe. From the moment that the army of

Napoleon crossed the Bidassoa, the favour of the Spanish American colonies was bid for by every power more or less concerned in the Peninsular conflict; and this gave occasion to Lord Liverpool to avow the policy which, on Perceval's becoming premier, he proposed to his cabinet, in regard to the colonial dominions of Spain. He distinctly declared that, while aiding Spain to drive out her invaders, the English government could not consent to weaken her by detaching her colonies. If, however, Spain should be compelled to succumb to Napoleon, then the aid of England would be given to sever the colonies from their European connection, in order that they might form no part of French-Spain, but remain purely Spanish, as a refuge for emigrants from old Spain, and a representative of the monarchy. Before this, Caracas had risen. Lord Liverpool treated *the mistake* indulgently, ascribing it to erroneous impressions of the intentions and conduct of the home government, and inviting the people back to a dutiful and honourable place as 'an integral part of the empire.' This letter was written in June 1810.

It is impossible to say what might have been the destiny of these colonies, if the citizens at Madrid had not cut the traces of the royal carriages on that memorable evening of March 1808, when the Bourbons of Spain were about to set forth for their American dominions, as the Braganzas of Portugal had done four months before. By the time Lord Liverpool's letter was received and published, Brazil was like another country from that which had been known by the name. Her ports were opened; her restrictions were removed; manufactures sprang up; newspapers circulated; and it seemed as if a specimen of European civilisation had been suddenly set down in the most conspicuous part of the South American continent. Something like this must have happened with the other provinces, if the Spanish royal family had arrived; but the people of Madrid had cut the traces, and hunted Godoy into a garret; the family went into a shameful captivity at Bayonne, instead of crossing the Atlantic; and the Spanish provincials had to act according to their own discretion.

They found this discretion a serious charge. The diffi-

culty to know what to do was so great, that disunion was seen to be inevitable from the beginning. Their allegiance was asked for, in 1808, by Murat, as lieutenant-general in the name of Charles IV.; and presently after, by the council of Ferdinand, established by him at Madrid between his father's abdication and his own departure for Bayonne; then by the juntas of Seville and Cadiz, appointed to carry on the affairs of the nation. The keen eye of Napoleon was also upon them. In July, 1808, a vessel arrived at the port of Caracas, charged with letters and secret instructions for the governor, who had received Murat's agents with apparent cordiality. The French captain had his audience of the governor, and was pleased with his reception; but, in an hour after, an English captain—Captain Beaver of the *Acasta*—presented himself also for audience. He was sent away, and desired to return in two hours. He spent those two hours in addressing the people in the streets, finding them wholly ignorant of the state of the mother-country, and of what the French had been doing there. When he had told the story, the inhabitants paraded the streets, bearing the portrait of Ferdinand VII., which they installed in the government-house, surrounded by lights and an enthusiastic crowd for the whole night. The French captain fled for his life; and Beaver, hastening after him, captured him and his brig in the course of a few days. To the other provinces, Napoleon sent circulars and agents. The proclamations of King Joseph were torn in pieces, and the agents driven away; and some few were killed. In this and the next year, the provinces transmitted to Spain not less than ninety millions of dollars in support of the national cause. This was done by the enthusiasm of the people, who were thinking of national, and not personal, interests. It appears, however, that their rulers, and most of the officials and provincial aristocracy, were less decided in their aims and wishes. As long as they could be secure of the maintenance of the connection between the mother-country and the colonies, they preferred that their own royal family should remain on the throne; but, rather than run any risk of separation, they would have acknowledged King Joseph. As the French successes in Spain became more

and more decided, the provincial rulers grew more open in their evidences of adhesion; and it is said that the viceroy of Mexico was the only official personage throughout the Spanish colonies who was not ready to transfer his allegiance to Joseph, when the news arrived of the occupation of Madrid by the French.

Mexico was the most flourishing of the Spanish colonies, and by far the least oppressed from home; yet the course of revolution began there. As soon as the people were officially appealed to for sympathy on behalf of their captive king, they raised their voices in one chorus of loyalty. It was clear that the Bonapartes had no chance with the inhabitants of Mexico. It was proposed to call together representatives of the people, and to establish a council or junta for the province, in imitation of that of the mother-country. The *audiencia*, or supreme court, appointed from Europe, objected to this, as a revolutionary proceeding, and arrested the governor in his bed, deposed him, and lodged him in the prisons of the Inquisition, because he appeared to favour the proposal. The creoles were irretrievably offended by this virtual sentence of exclusion from provincial office and influence; and at once the struggle became one between the European and the native citizens, and the question was which party should be held to represent the home government. The Europeans assumed that they did; and they set up a governor in the person of an archbishop from Spain. The creoles maintained that the liberal governor had been wrongfully deposed, and that the authority of the king had been outraged in his person. The juntas at home supported the European party, and showed no disposition to conciliate the creoles. The audiencia at Mexico was praised for what it had done, and authorised to administer the government. When there was talk at Cadiz of admitting a representation from the colonies, all citizens of a mixed race were excluded: and, in fact, no representatives found their way from Mexico to Cadiz at all. Some few, before resident at Cadiz, were chosen on the spot, and admitted; but it was a foolish and dangerous mockery. A certain degree of commercial freedom was granted, and then denied. Meantime, the insults of the Europeans in the province

became intolerable; and, in 1809, a revolt was planned, which was obviated by timely arrests. In September, 1810, there was a rising against the Europeans, attended with much cruelty, throughout almost the whole province; but the city of Mexico was held against the insurgents by a new viceroy just arrived; and in November, and again in January, it was believed that the royal cause was made secure. It was not so, however. The conflict revived, as often as it seemed exhausted, for some years. When the Spanish constitution of 1812 was promulgated in the colonies, it seemed as if the Europeans were annihilated as a political party; and all offices were filled at once by natives; and the first outbreak of the freedom of the press terrified all who had ever been connected with the government. But, in 1814, Ferdinand abolished the constitution on his return to Spain, and it was expected that the Europeans in Mexico would recover their spirits. It was too late for this. The viceroy wrote to his court that the desire for independence had become too strong to be met by any military policy. The name of the king was still used by the independents, but in no sense which could interfere with their resolution to govern themselves. The towns might, he said, be garrisoned with royalists; but the whole country was disposed in favour of the independence of Mexico. For his own part, he was willing to undertake the military occupation of the province, if authorised from home to proceed as against an enemy, even to the point of laying waste the country with fire and sword. If he was to do so, he must have troops and equipments. These were granted, to a sufficient extent to overpower the independents in military conflict. By the beginning of 1817, all but a few of their chiefs laid down their arms, accepted the pardon offered by government, and permitted that the fact should be proclaimed to the world, that Mexico was in an orderly state as a colony of Spain.

It was owing to the hardness and imperiousness with which Spain demanded absolute submission from her provinces, even when at the lowest point of her fortunes, that she lost some of them which were truly unwilling to be severed from their European connection, and had to part with others sooner than would have been necessary. The

revolution in New Grenada became very complete at last; but it was by slow degrees. At first, it was a mere local rising—at Quito—and intended to procure redress of the grievances caused by the old colonial government. For the greater part of six years, it was conducted and sustained chiefly by only one out of three divisions composing the viceroyalty. The audiencias of Panama and Quito could give little or no help; and the acts of the so-called congress of New Grenada expressed the will of Bogota alone. After the old colonial system, the liberal party disowned the authority of the juntas in Spain—then the regencies—then the cortes—then the sovereignty of Ferdinand—and, at last, the connection with Spain altogether. Still Spain allowed no alternative between complete independence and unqualified submission; and the people of New Grenada chose that of complete independence. They appointed an executive government composed of three persons; and the three were well known to be zealous republicans. The appointment took place at the beginning of 1815, after the famous Bolivar, then compelled to retire from Venezuela, had given the benefit of his generalship to New Grenada, and had been proclaimed captain-general of Venezuela and New Grenada. The appointment of Bolivar was opposed by the city of Carthagena. Bolivar blockaded the city and spent precious time before it, while a formidable Spanish force was approaching. As the Spaniards came on, the inhabitants sank deeper into faction; and before the summer of 1816, the rule of the mother-country was nearly re-established. It was rendered to all appearance secure by the surrender of the capital of the Spanish general in June; and the world was informed that New Grenada also was in an orderly state. The independents were not converted, however; only dispersed. They had no power in the cities, and no army in the fields; but their soldiery swarmed in the mountains, under the aspect of guerilla bands; and there was a spirit of expectation, awake and watchful, abroad over the whole region, awaiting the hour of independence, which was sure to arrive.

The two other great divisions, Venezuela and La Plata, were more interesting to Great Britain during this struggle

than Mexico and New Grenada. She had vivid recollections of her late adventures to Buenos Ayres and Monte Video; and not only was Venezuela the country of Miranda, but the island of Curaçoa, very near the coast, and the neighbouring district of British Guiana, gave England an immediate interest in the condition of the province. It was from Curaçoa that Sir James Cockburn crossed to Caracas to propitiate the people in favour of Ferdinand, and rouse them against the French in 1808; when his entry into the province was like a royal progress, and England was at the summit of popular favour. It was to the next governor of Curaçoa, Brigadier-general Ledyard, that Lord Liverpool addressed, in 1810, the letter before referrred to as explaining the policy of the Perceval administration in regard to South America. It was at Curaçoa that Miranda landed towards the end of that year. It had been hoped that he might have been persuaded to stay in London. He was known as the great champion of independence, and the existing popular government at Caracas thought it too soon to talk of independence. They had been busily engaged in improving the state of the province; they had abolished the capitation-tax upon the Indians; made the slave-trade illegal; and removed all the worst imposts which affected agriculture and commerce. Miranda was pretty sure to precipitate matters, and prove a formidable rival in the good-will of the people; so he was to be detained in London as long as possible. He was aware of all this, and slipped away quietly; not so quietly, however, as to arrive without introductions. He brought letters to the governor of Curaçoa from the Duke of Cambridge and Mr. Vansittart. It was an English vessel which carried him to his own shore. Whether it was this close connection with England —whose policy now was to preserve the colonies to the mother-country—that had changed Miranda's views, or that times had changed, and not he, the constitution he proposed was found, after all, not to be liberal enough; and he lost his popularity. Still, his arrival was a stimulus to decisive action, and on the 11th of July, 1811, the Declaration of Independence of Venezuela was published, according to a decree of the congress assembled at

Caracas. The constitution mainly resembled that of the United States, except that there were three executive chiefs instead of one, and that the Roman Catholic religion was established; provision being made that no foreigners should be permitted to reside in the country, unless they respected its established faith.

It seems to have occurred to few or none of the parties concerned in these South American revolutions, to inquire whether the people were fit for self-government, or competent to settle how they would be governed. The old colonial rule was indefensible on every ground, and intolerable to the people. But it was a long step to take at once from that system to a constitution like that of the United States. Here were mixed races and severed factions, burning with jealousy, revenge, ambition, and every other evil passion: here was a total popular ignorance of the very meaning of law and government: here were habits of disorder, in alternation and reaction with tyrannical coercion: and here was an exclusive religion, sunk to the lowest point of superstition, by which the whole mind of the country was either subordinated to the most ignorant of priesthoods, or in a state of conscious impiety in the act of resistance. It appears strange that any enlightened person should have supposed that such a constitution as that of the United States could work well in Venezuela, on the instant of its severance from Spain, and with a Spanish priesthood spread over the whole province.

In July 1811, as has been related, the constitution was proclaimed. For a while all went well. The army was steady, commerce flourished, the people were contented. Throughout the autumn everybody was in spirits, unless it were that the agriculturists had some apprehensions of a dry season. In December the earth began to tremble, and the courage of the people was somewhat shaken. As the weeks went on, not a drop of rain fell within more than 300 miles from the capital. On Holy Thursday, the 26th of March 1812, almost the entire population was to be in the churches; and if no rain fell before that day, the whole people would pray, as with one voice, for rain. The sky remained cloudless, and on the great day the heat was excessive. At a few minutes after four, when the

churches were crowded, the bells clanged of their own accord; the pavement heaved under the people's feet, the steeples toppled and fell. There were two earthquakes at once; that is, the movements of the ground crossed each other. Nothing could stand this. The city of Caracas was almost entirely overthrown, and much of it buried. The clear moon of that night, which shone brilliantly when the dust had subsided, lighted up as dreary a scene as the earth ever presented. No food was to be had; the conduit pipes were snapped and crushed, and the springs choked up, and not a drop could be obtained for the dying who groaned out their entreaties for water. As the dead could not be buried, they were burned; and the yellow fires gleamed for many nights in the moonlight. The guilty confessed their sins aloud in the public ways; the licentious hastened to marry those whom they had seduced, and to acknowledge their illegitimate children; men of good fame avowed former frauds, and made restitution; enemies were reconciled. Such were the spectacles seen amidst the moral monstrosities which are always witnessed in such crises of panic and suffering, when the brutal and reckless come out into the light. The priests said that these acts of penitence and reparation were well, as far as they went, but they were not enough. The earthquake was a retributive infliction for the general sin of the community in setting up a constitution for itself. The Holy Thursday procession of two years before had been the occasion of the first talk of the new constitution; and here, on the same high festival, was the sign of the displeasure of Heaven. Aided by other influences, the event, and this preaching on it, availed to overthrow the new liberties of Venezuela. The Spanish troops pushed the advantage given by the panic of the people. Whole bodies of the patriot army went over to them. Bolivar failed to hold a fortress against them; and in July, Miranda agreed to a treaty which introduced the new Spanish constitution, in the place of that of Venezuela. This was the end of Miranda's career. The old patriot was seized in his bed by a party of political foes, of whom Bolivar was one, and put in irons, with the knowledge of the Spanish general, who took no pains to help him. After some months'

imprisonment in irons, he was sent to Spain, where he died in close captivity in 1816.

It is plain that there was no political enlightenment in Venezuela which could secure any stability. The country changed hands more than once, and was cruelly ravaged by each party in turn. Bolivar, as dictator, was dreadfully vindictive; and when he and his party were driven out of the country, and the patriots completely humbled, by the end of 1814, the Spanish rule was a mere system of barbarian pillage and oppression. During 1815 the patriots were quiet. In 1816, Bolivar and some comrades, driven out of New Grenada, were joined by volunteers from Great Britain and other European countries, and made an attempt at invasion, which was unsuccessful at the time. The struggle, which proved successful at last, was begun, with similar assistance, in January 1817. The conflict was maintained till 1823, when the last of the Spanish troops left the country. In 1819, Bolivar had freed New Grenada; and the two states were now united for a few years, till the inconvenience of their junction was found to outweigh its advantages. This is looking forward a little. In 1816, when, as we have seen, Mexico and New Grenada were humbled under the foot of the restored Ferdinand, Venezuela was in no better condition.

We must now see how matters stood in La Plata.

When the news arrived there of the French invasion of Spain, the viceroy of Rio de la Plata was the General Linières to whom Whitelocke had submitted the year before. Linières was a Frenchman, and in the interest of Napoleon; but he was soon superseded by a governor in the Spanish interest. He was afterwards executed, having been taken in arms against the patriot cause, which was, for a time, uppermost in 1810. After some vicissitudes, the Spanish flag was abolished in 1813, and coins were, for the first time, struck with the republican arms. Then followed a succession of Directors, whose presidency would, it was hoped, still the vibration of the passions.' Their short terms of office seem to show, however, that the passions were still vibrating very strongly. In March 1816, the state of Rio de la Plata proclaimed, by the

mouth of its congress, its declaration of independence. General Pueyrredon was made the supreme Director. Here is one great state which was not under the foot of the restored Ferdinand in 1816.

The province of Paraguay managed matters very quietly. The people drove out the Spanish force sent against them when all La Plata was in commotion. In 1811, they deposed the Spanish government, and set up a junta, with Dr. Francia as secretary. In 1813, he was called consul; and in 1814, Dictator of Paraguay; and so he remained till his death in 1840—keeping his state independent at once of Buenos Ayres and of Spain, but under an excessive despotism from himself.

Chili accompanied the fortunes of La Plata. The Spanish authorities were early deposed; but the usual intrigues and factions among the patriots followed, and gave occasion for the Spanish forces, who were strong in Upper Peru, to come down, and attempt to regain the province. The Carreras were then at the head of the provincial affairs; and next, the well-known O'Higgins was made commander-in-chief. He so far reduced the Spaniards that a treaty, advantageous to Chili, was prepared under the mediation of a British officer then on the spot—Captain Hillyar. But the viceroy of Peru drew back from his promise to ratify the treaty; and war began again. The Spaniards conquered, and remained supreme in Chili from 1814 to 1816. La Plata could not acquiesce in this subjugation of the bordering province, though the mighty Andes rose between. General San Martin, who had been laid aside by sickness, recovered his health and energy, and made a wonderful passage of the mountain-chain in the month of January 1817. His little army crossed five ridges, terrible with ice and snow, besides many smaller ones—mules and horses, and even men, dropping dead in the cold. At the end of a fortnight, he was in fighting order on the other side. On the 12th of February, he gained a victory which secured the freedom of Chili.

In 1816, therefore, the Spanish rule was subsisting in Mexico, New Grenada, Venezuela, and Peru—all northern provinces. The great empire of Brazil was rising in its

fortunes, under the advantages of the royal residence—of its being made, in fact, the Portuguese empire from 1807. It had put out a hand to keep quiet the little province of Uruguay, at its southern extremity. The provinces which had declared their independence, and which were concluded to have republican tendencies and intentions, were La Plata and Chili. All the world knew that this was no permanent settlement. The northern provinces would not remain tranquil under the old colonial rule; and it was not probable that Spain would acquiesce in the independence of the southern states. It was a matter, not only of curiosity and interest what would happen next, but of serious political importance to the governments of Europe. Some of them, and Great Britain for one, must take some part in promoting or opposing the independence of the Spanish colonies of South America; and no British statesman was likely to forget that assurance of Mr. Pitt, in 1790, which was always in Canning's mind—that the scheme of emancipating South America was one which would not be lost sight of, but would infallibly engage the attention of every minister of our country

CHAPTER IX.

Opening of Parliament—Outrage on the Prince-regent—Alarm—Reports of Secret Committees—March of the Blanketeers—Derby Insurrection.

On the 28th of January, the prince-regent opened the fifth session of the existing parliament. The speech from the throne contained the following passage: 'In considering our internal situation you will, I doubt not, feel a just indignation at the attempts which have been made to take advantage of the distresses of the country, for the purpose of exciting a spirit of sedition and violence. I am too well convinced of the loyalty and good sense of the great body of His Majesty's subjects, to believe them capable of being perverted by the arts which are employed to seduce them; but I am determined to omit no precau-

tions for preserving the public peace, and for counteracting the designs of the disaffected.' It would have been difficult to infer from this language that the government believed that a formidable and widely organised insurrection was threatening the country, and that the only remedy was a violation of the constitutional safeguards of the liberties of the people. Attempts to excite a spirit of sedition, amongst a people incapable 'of being perverted by the arts employed to seduce them,' were subjects for vigilance towards the few, without infringement of the rights of the many. The seconder of the address in the Commons asserted that the demagogues and their acts would die of themselves. The debate in the Lower House was suddenly interrupted by a message from the Lords. An outrage had been offered to the prince-regent on his return from opening the parliament. The windows of the state-carriage had been broken by some missile. The two Houses, after agreeing upon an address to the prince-regent on this event, adjourned. Upon the resumption of the debate the next day in the Commons, and upon its commencement in the Lords, the insult to the representative of the sovereign, which was at first asserted to be an attempt upon his life, gave a decided tone to the proceedings of both Houses. In both assemblies the opposition loudly proclaimed the necessity of a rigid and unsparing economy; and the proposed amendment upon the address went directly to pledge the most severe reduction of every possible expense. The practical answer to these abortive proposals was the intimation of Lord Sidmouth, that in three days he should present a message from the prince-regent on the subject of the alleged disaffection of large bodies of the people. *Alarm*, that became the great instrument of governing till the close of the reign of George III., had its full capabilities revealed in what Lord Dudley described as 'the popgun plot.' Addressing the Bishop of Llandaff on the 1st of February 1817, this able and temperate observer says: 'Pray tell me what you think of the state of public opinion and feeling at this moment. Is there a dangerous spirit abroad, or is there not? Canning says there is. But an eloquent minister is a bad authority upon such a subject. An *alarm* is the harvest

of such a personage.' With a real admiration of many points in the character of this 'personage,' we cannot but regard the period in which he was a mere gleaner in the harvest of alarm as the least creditable portion of his life. He had been excluded from power for three years. He returned to jealous colleagues and to bitter rivals. He could not exist out of the circle of party. Rather than not win the equivocal honours of a partisan, he was content to be a tool. When Canning, on the second night of the debate on the address, denied that the existing state of the representation was a grievance; when he said: 'I deny the assumption that the House of Commons, as it stands, is not, to all practical purposes, an adequate representation of the people; I deny that it requires any amendment or alteration;' he spoke, we have no doubt, his honest convictions. But when he attempted, as he did in the same speech, to confound the most moderate projects of reform with the doctrines of universal suffrage and annual parliaments, and mixed up the whole body of propounders of these doctrines with the mad fanatics called Spenceans, we lament to see a great mind prostituting its talents to such dishonest advocacy. He was thrust forward to play a part, and he so played it that he brought down his fine genius to the level of those under whom he served. But the policy was successful. It was in preparation for the message of the 3rd of February, that the prince-regent had given orders that there be laid before the Houses, 'papers containing information respecting certain practices, meetings, and combinations in the metropolis, and in different parts of the kingdom, evidently calculated to endanger the public tranquillity, to alienate the affections of His Majesty's subjects from His Majesty's person and government, and to bring into hatred and contempt the whole system of our laws and institutions.' In moving the order of the day for the consideration of this message, Lord Sidmouth, in the House of Lords, affirmed that the communication was in no degree founded on, or connected with, the outrage upon the prince-regent on the first day of the session. And yet the House of Lords saw the attack upon the prince-regent as 'an additional and melancholy proof of the efficacy of this

system [the system complained of in the message] to destroy all reverence for authority.' It is difficult to imagine that so serious a charge against a large portion of the people, as that made in the message of the 3rd of February, should have been so lightly passed over in the royal speech of the 28th of January, had not some new circumstances arisen to warrant the course which the government was now taking. Was it that the fears of the illustrious personage who had heard the upbraiding groans of the multitude, and had sustained a rude insult from some reckless hand, had urged his ministers upon the career which they were now entering, of exaggerating discontents, of tempting distress into sedition, of sowing suspicion of the poor in the minds of the rich, of confounding the reformer and the anarchist in one general hatred? One of the keenest of political reasoners speaks of sovereigns, who, 'neglecting all virtuous actions, began to believe that princes were exalted for no other end but to discriminate themselves from their subjects by their pomp, luxury, and all other effeminate qualities; by which means they fell into the hatred of the people, and by consequence became afraid of them, and that fear increasing, they began to meditate revenge.' Up to a certain point, we are constrained to believe that this temper was something akin to that of the regent in those unhappy days. It is well that the genius of our constitution rendered this temper comparatively powerless.

The message of the prince-regent of the 3d of February was referred to a secret committee in each House, and these committees made their reports on the 18th and 19th of the same month. We have already noticed that portion of the report of the Lords which describes 'the traitorous conspiracy,' which was developed in the riot at Spa-fields. One third of the report is devoted to a narrative of this riot, and the designs of its miserable abettors, in terms of the most fearful solemnity. Not Cicero's denunciations of Catiline are more horror-stirring. The report then proceeds to detail the general state of the country. 'It appears clearly that the object is, by means of societies or clubs, established, or to be established, in all parts of Great Britain, *under pretence of parliamentary reform*, to

infect the minds of all classes of the community, and particularly of those whose situation most exposes them to such impressions, with a spirit of discontent and disaffection, of insubordination, and contempt of all law, religion, and morality, and to hold out to them the plunder of all property as the main object of their efforts, and the restoration of their natural rights; and no endeavours are omitted to prepare them to take up arms on the first signal for accomplishing their designs.' . . . 'The country societies are principally to be found in, and in the neighbourhood of Leicester, Loughborough, Nottingham, Mansfield, Derby, Sheffield, Blackburn, Manchester, Birmingham, and Norwich, and in Glasgow and its vicinity; but they extend and are spreading in some parts of the country to almost every village.' The report finally calls for 'further provision for the preservation of the public peace, and for the protection of interests in which the happiness of every class of the community is deeply and equally involved.' The report of the House of Commons begins with the Spencean societies, and goes on to describe, at greater length than that of the Lords, the Spa-fields conspiracy. The Hampden Clubs are most emphatically denounced as aiming at 'nothing short of a revolution.' The report of the Commons thus concludes: 'Your committee cannot contemplate the activity and arts of the leaders in this conspiracy, and the numbers whom they have already seduced and may seduce; the oaths by which many of them are bound together; the means suggested and prepared for the forcible attainment of their objects; the nature of the objects themselves, which are not only the overthrow of all the political institutions of the kingdom, but also such a subversion of the rights and principles of property as must necessarily lead to general confusion, plunder, and bloodshed; without submitting to the most serious attention of the House the dangers which exist, and which the utmost vigilance of government, under the existing laws, has been found inadequate to prevent.' Looking at these reports in connection with the facts which were subsequently brought to light, under the most solemn judicial investigations conducted in the spirit of the constitution, and

under the extra-judicial powers which were granted for the detection and punishment of guilt, we must either come to the conclusion that the committees were the dupes of blind or wicked informers, or were unable to arrive at a sound judgment upon the facts presented to them, or were not unwilling to spread a panic which would leave parliament for an indefinite time to its ordinary struggles for the interests of particular classes, to the comparative neglect of the welfare of the great body of the people. But, under the influence of these reports, it would have been impossible to have made such a resistance to the government as would have prevented the enactment of stringent measures, one of which was decidedly unconstitutional. Bills were brought in and passed by large majorities, to guard against and avert the dangers which had been so alarmingly proclaimed. The first of these renewed the act for the prevention and punishment of attempts to seduce soldiers and sailors from their allegiance; the second extended to the prince-regent all the safeguards against treasonable attempts which secure the actual sovereign; the third was for the prevention of seditious meetings. The last of the four was the most dangerous and the least called for. It gave to the executive power the fearful right of imprisonment without trial. In common parlance, the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended, under 'An Act to empower His Majesty to secure and detain such persons as His Majesty shall suspect are conspiring against his person and government.' The suspension was, however, in this instance, limited to the ensuing 1st of July.

The Habeas Corpus Suspension Act was passed on the 3rd of March; the bill for restraining seditious meetings did not become law till the 29th of March. Within a week after the passing of the act for imprisonment without trial, and before the magistrates had received any accession to their power as to the dispersion of tumultuous assemblies, an occurrence took place at Manchester, which was at once evidence of the agitated condition of distressed multitudes in the manufacturing districts, and of the extreme weakness of their purposes. This was the famous march of the Blanketeers. And yet, when the renewed

suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act was proposed in June, the report of the secret committee entered into minute detail of this senseless project, as one of the arguments for tampering again with the liberties of the whole kingdom. A plain and honest account of this affair is given by Samuel Bamford. According to his narrative, William Benbow, the shoemaker, had taken a great share in getting up and arranging a vast meeting, subsequently called the Blanket Meeting, for the purpose of marching to London to petition the prince-regent in person. Bamford himself wholly condemned the measure. He deprecated the blind zeal of those who had proposed it; he believed they were instigated by those who would betray them. Up to this time the maxim of the reformers had been: 'Hold fast by the laws.' New doctrines now began to be broached, which, if not in direct violation of the law, were ill-disguised subterfuges for its evasion. The Blanket Meeting, however, took place in St. Peter's Field at Manchester. It consisted, according to Bamford, of four or five thousand operatives—according to the second report of the Lords' secret committee, of ten or twelve thousand. 'Many of the individuals,' says Bamford, 'were observed to have blankets, rugs, or large coats, rolled up and tied knapsack-like on their backs; some carried bundles under their arms; some had papers, supposed to be petitions, rolled up; and some had stout walking-sticks.' The magistrates came upon the field and read the riot act; the meeting was dispersed by the military and constables; three hundred commenced a straggling march, followed by a body of yeomanry, and a hundred and eighty reached Macclesfield at nine o'clock at night. Some were apprehended, some lay in the fields. The next morning the numbers had almost melted away; 'about a score arrived at Leek, and six only were known to pass Ashbourne Bridge.' More terrible events, however, were in preparation. According to the second report of the Lords' secret committee: 'it was on the night of the 30th of March that a general insurrection was intended to have commenced at Manchester. The magistrates were to be seized; the prisoners were to be liberated; the soldiers were either to be surprised in their

barracks, or a certain number of factories were to be set on fire, for the purpose of drawing the soldiers out of their barracks, of which a party stationed near them for that object were then to take possession, with a view of seizing the magazine.' . . . . 'This atrocious conspiracy was detected by the vigilance of the magistrates, and defeated by the apprehension and confinement of some of the ringleaders a few days before the period fixed for its execution.' Bamford records, that on the day after the Blanket Meeting, 'a man dressed much like a dyer' came to him at Middleton, 'to propose that in consequence of the treatment which the Blanketeers had received at the meeting and afterwards, "a Moscow of Manchester" should take place that very night.' Bamford and his friends dismissed him with the assurance that he was the dupe of some designing villain. The scheme which this dupe or scoundrel propounded was exactly that described in the Lords' report. But there were men who did not receive this proposal with disgust and suspicion, as those of Middleton did. The avowed reform-leaders—delegates and Hampden-club men—were under perpetual terror. Some wandered from their homes in dread of imprisonment; others were seized in the bosom of their families. Public meetings were at an end. The fears and passions of large bodies of men had no safety-valve. 'Open meetings thus being suspended, secret ones ensued; they were originated at Manchester, and assembled under various pretexts. . . . Their real purpose, divulged only to the initiated, was to carry into effect the night-attack on Manchester, the attempt at which had before failed for want of arrangement and co-operation.' A little while after this 'Moscow' proposal, a co-delegate came to Bamford, to propose the assassination of all the ministers. We know that this scheme smouldered for several years. 'The fact was,' says Bamford, 'this unfortunate person, in the confidence of an unsuspecting mind, as I believe, had during one of his visits to London formed a connection with Oliver, the spy—which connection, during several succeeding months, gave a new impulse to secret meetings and plots in various parts of Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Derbyshire; and ended in the tragedy of

Brandreth, Ludlow, and Turner, at Derby.' The course of this tragedy we have now to recount. It is the only one of the insurrectionary movements of the manufacturing districts, in 1817, that has left any traces of judicial investigation, with the exception of proceedings at York, at which all the state-prisoners were discharged by the grand jury, or acquitted upon trial. All the persons connected with the Blanket expedition, and the expected risings at Manchester, were discharged before trial.

The midland counties of Nottingham, Leicester, and Derby, had been in a disturbed state for several years. The habit of daring outrage was familiar to large numbers of the manufacturing population. We have already exhibited that course of ignorant and brutal violence, known as Luddism. On the 23rd of July 1817, Mr. Ponsonby described this system, as one that had not originated in political principles; but he expressed his belief that those who had been trained to mischief by its laws had mixed themselves with those who had political objects in view, and that from them had proceeded some of the most atrocious suggestions for the disturbance of the public peace. At the Leicester assizes on the 1st of April, eight men were tried and convicted of the most daring outrages at Loughborough, and six of these offenders were executed on the 17th of the same month. There was not the slightest attempt at this trial to connect the crimes of these men with any political opinions. But amongst a population that for four years had witnessed the night-attacks of armed men upon machinery, and with whom some of the leaders of such organised attacks were in habitual intercourse, it is manifest that the materials for political insurrection were abundantly accumulated. It was not the part of a wise and humane government to permit the feeblest spark of excitement from without to approach these inflammable materials. We do not think that the facts which time has revealed warrant us in going so far as Sir Samuel Romilly, who in his place in parliament declared, on the 27th of January 1818, that in his conscience he believed the whole of the Derbyshire insurrection was the work of the persons sent by government; but we do think that these facts justify a strong

conviction that without the agency of these persons the insurrection would not have taken place. On the motion for the first reading of the bill for continuing the suspension of the Habeas Corpus, on the 23rd of June, Mr. Ponsonby, who had been a member of the secret committee, but had dissented from the majority as to the necessity of the further suspension, stated to the House 'some of the information gained from the papers and evidence presented to the committee.' In March, a person calling himself a delegate came to London from one of the midland districts, and was introduced to one of similar opinions. He of similar opinions gave discouraging information as to the state of public feeling in the capital. The representations of the delegate as to the impatience of the country districts 'to throw off the yoke,' as he termed it, were not responded to. But he met two other persons ready to return with him as delegates from London; and Mr. Oliver proposed to go along with them, making a fourth delegate. Before they proceeded on their journey, Oliver was in communication with the Home Office; but received no instructions to compromise the safety of any one by tempting them into practices which he afterwards exposed. The co-delegates relied fully on Oliver—the country delegate introduced him to all his friends as a second self. Oliver remained among these people from the 17th of April to the 27th of May, everywhere received as the London delegate. He was examined before the secret committee, and told them he was very shy of giving information; what he said was, that 'London was ready to rise, and only wished to know what assistance could be derived from the country; and that the people of London would not stir first, but would be ready to second any movement from the country. His friend, the country delegate, gave effect to this information, by telling his brethren, the country delegates, that 75,000 individuals could be relied on in the eastern parts of the capital, and 75,000 in the western. Mr. Ponsonby thus showed, with a moderation and candour most advantageously contrasted with the frenzied declamations against individual members of the government, made by such popularity-hunters as Sir Francis Burdett and Mr.

Grey Bennett, that the representations of Oliver himself, and the representations which he permitted to be made with his knowledge and approval, did excite the wretched individuals with whom the spy-delegate and the dupe-delegate conversed, to acts of rebellion or insubordination. But Mr. Ponsonby only traced Oliver to the 27th of May. We are now enabled to follow his course up to the moment of the Derbyshire insurrection. On the 6th of June an outbreak in Yorkshire was expected, and ten delegates were arrested at Thornhill-lees, near Dewsbury. On the day of the meeting, Oliver called on Mr. Willans, a bookseller of Dewsbury, and urged him to attend the meeting of delegates at Thornhill-lees. He had two months before addressed Willans in the most traitorous language. Willans, having some suspicion of the incendiary, refused to go. Oliver himself attended the meeting, and was arrested with the others; but in the evening he was at large in Wakefield, and, entering the coach to go to Leeds, was accosted by a livery servant of Sir John Byng, who commanded the forces in the disturbed districts. This servant, after Oliver was gone, said that a few days before he had driven him in a gig from his master's house to meet a coach. These circumstances were discovered by the activity of Mr. Baines, of Leeds, who published them in his influential newspaper; and they formed the subject of a violent debate in the House of Commons on the 16th of June. In a work of considerable historical importance, which appeared in February 1847, and to which we shall have occasion frequently to refer, this particular transaction was minutely gone into, for the purpose of justifying Lord Sidmouth, as secretary of state for the home department, against the imputations which arose out of the employment of such persons as Oliver. 'None of them,' says the author, 'were employed in the first instance by Lord Sidmouth, but themselves sought him out: and if, which is not probable, they in any instances instigated the conspirators to crime, in order to betray them, the treacherous act must have been entirely their own; as nothing would have excited more his lordship's indignation than the bare idea of so base a proceeding.' The Dean of Norwich has obtained

the most satisfactory testimony of Lord Strafford (formerly Sir John Byng) to this opinion of Lord Sidmouth's own conduct, in a letter written in August 1846: 'Oliver,' Lord Strafford writes, 'was sent to me with a letter from Lord Sidmouth, to the purport that he, Oliver, was going down into that part of the country where meetings were being frequently held, and that he had been desired to communicate to me any information he might obtain as to the time and place of such meetings, in order that I might take timely measures to prevent their taking place; the wish and intention being to prevent, not to encourage them, as was alleged against the government. Sir John Byng himself was perfectly incapable, as was acknowledged on all hands, of turning the spy into a temptor. We have no doubt that Oliver was a double deceiver. On the 16th of June, Mr. Allsop, who had been active at Nottingham in the preservation of the peace, as the Dean of Norwich reports, wrote to Lord Sidmouth as follows: 'I feel myself called upon, in justice to Oliver, to make this communication to your lordship respecting him. The first time I ever saw him was on the 7th of June, on his arrival at Nottingham from Leeds. Although he then knew that a meeting was to take place in the evening, he fixed to leave for Birmingham in the afternoon, and only consented to stay for the meeting at the solicitation of Mr. Hooley and myself, in order to furnish us with the necessary information. Oliver expressly stated to us that his instructions from Sir John Byng were, not to conceal anything as to the Yorkshire meeting by which these people could be deceived; and he also stated his instructions from your lordship not to hold out any encouragement. It was then most explicitly decided, that at the meeting in the evening he should not, in any way whatever, hold out the least encouragement or inducement to the persons who might be there, to take any other steps than such as they might think proper to adopt themselves; and I am persuaded, my lord, that such was this man's conduct accordingly, for his life was in the greatest danger, their suspicion of him being excited by his refusal to remain at Nottingham and countenance their proceedings, and he only consented to

stay, at last, to lessen their suspicions.' Of this meeting at Nottingham on the 7th of June, the trials of the Derby traitors convey no record. All evidence was suppressed of any circumstances prior to the 8th of June. We have now to follow the course of these remarkable trials, with the certainty that the spy of government was at the meeting of the 7th of June, at which this outbreak was organised, and with a tolerably clear conviction, as will become more evident, that the unhappy agents in this insurrection were acted upon by the most extraordinary delusions from without. The defence of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus was, that the leaders of a conspiracy might be seized so as to prevent an outbreak. The peace preservers of Nottingham on the 7th of June induced the government spy to attend a meeting of supposed conspirators, for the purpose of giving them the necessary information. If they had acted upon that information by arresting the conspirators, the Derby insurrection would have been crushed in the egg. The expression of Mr. Allsop, 'it was explicitly decided' that no encouragement should be given by the spy, assumes a discussion previous to the decision. Where there are clear and honest intentions alone, it is not necessary explicitly to decide against the adoption of a treacherous and disgraceful line of conduct.

On Sunday, the 8th of June, there was a remarkable assemblage at Pentridge, a village situated some two miles from the Ambergate station, on the present North Midland Railway. The village is in the hilly and thinly peopled district to the west of the river Derwent. In the neighbourhood of Pentridge there are several other scattered villages—all not far removed from a direct road to Nottingham. About a mile from Pentridge, at Butterley, was a large iron-foundry. Two men in the employ of the proprietors of this foundry went into the White Horse public-house, at Pentridge, on the morning of the 8th of June, and found a good many persons in the parlour there, 'talking about this revolution.' There was one amongst them they called 'The Captain.' He had a map in his hand, and the people came in, and kept asking him questions; and he said, there would be no good to be done

except a complete overthrow of the government. All the country was to rise—all at one time. Many talked thus. They made no secret. They spoke it openly. They did not mind who heard them. They said they had plenty of pikes; and they would go and take Nottingham wholly to themselves; and when they got to Nottingham, every man would have a hundred guineas and plenty of rum, and it would be nothing but a journey of pleasure. This extraordinary assembly lasted six or seven hours. The two men from the ironworks were special constables; but they were afraid to say anything about it. Having agreed to meet on the night of the 9th, after dark, the people separated. The captain, with the map in his hand, was Jeremiah Brandreth, a framework knitter, whose family had received parochial relief. Mr. Denman—who was counsel for the prisoners—after Brandreth had been convicted, compared this man with the Corsair of Lord Byron, as one who

> Dazzles, leads, yet chills, the vulgar heart;

and obtains his superiority by

> The power, the nerve, the magic of the mind.

In spite of Mr. Denman's rhetorical description of the mastery of this man over his weak followers, through 'the influence of great courage, of uncommon decision, of unrelenting firmness; the influence of an eye like no eye that I ever beheld before, of a countenance and figure formed for activity, enterprise, and command,' we must be content to believe, from the evidence of Brandreth's acts, that he was a frantic enthusiast, goaded to violence by great poverty, by imaginary oppression, and, what is more, by the grossest delusions as to his own power and the strength of his cause. We do not think that he was the less dangerous from his real character and the real circumstances around him; but, we believe, as Mr. Denman came to the conclusion, that, in spite of his influence and command, 'he was most clearly himself an instrument wielded by other hands.' On Saturday night, the 7th of June, Oliver goes to a meeting at Nottingham, with instructions from Sir John Byng, 'not to conceal anything as

to the Yorkshire meeting by which these people could be deceived.' On Sunday morning the Nottingham captain is heard saying: 'All the country is to rise, all at one time.' On Monday night he passes the door of a labouring-man at South Wingfield, about three miles from Pentridge, in his way to an old barn up in the field; and he urges the man to come with him, saying, that 'the countries, England, Ireland, and France, were to rise that night at ten o'clock; and that 'the northern clouds, men from the north, would come down and sweep all before them.' This is somewhat different from the information that Oliver was authorised to give to the Nottingham meeting, that the Yorkshire delegates—the northern clouds—were scattered on the previous Friday. It is difficult not to regard the language of Brandreth as pure insanity, especially when we contrast it with the sober sense of some around him. 'There was an old woman standing by,' says the South Wingfield man, 'and she tapped him on the shoulder, and said: "My lad, we have got a magistrate here;"' and the labourer himself 'thought he must be drunk or mad, to think of such things.' But on the madman went. In the old barn at South Wingfield he assembled twenty men, who had pikes and guns, and they went forward, stopping at solitary houses, and demanding guns, and dragging unwilling men out of their beds and hiding-places, and compelling them to march with them. At the farmhouse of a widow, who behaved with unflinching courage, Brandreth fired in at a window and killed one of her servants, upon arms being refused to him. His followers said he should not have shot that poor innocent man; and he replied it was his duty to do it. Onwards they marched—the volunteers and the conscripts; and the captain when they halted at some lone dwellings, and met with any one who refused to march, had his ready exhortation, that 'a great cloud out of the north would sweep all before them;' with the more particular information, that 'it would not be necessary to go further than Nottingham, for London would be taken by the time they got there.' Who can doubt that the unhappy man was dreaming of the '75,000 men in the eastern parts of the capital, and 75,000 in the western?' Some of the pressed men ran away in the darkness; one

refused to march in rank, and upon Brandreth swearing he would shoot him in a moment, the bold fellow stepped up to him with his knife; and the captain turned off from him. During all this march the rain was incessant. By the time they reached the Butterley ironworks, their numbers amounted to about a hundred.* Brandreth was boldly met by Mr. Goodwin, the manager of the works, and, when he demanded men, was told: 'You shall not have one of them; you are too many already, unless you were going for a better purpose; disperse! depend upon it, the laws will be too strong for you; you are going with halters about your necks.' Three men took shelter in the office of the works. One man, Isaac Ludlam, who was afterwards convicted and executed, was exhorted by Mr. Goodwin not to go on; but he answered, much agitated: 'I am as bad as I can be; I cannot go back.' After a short pause, Brandreth gave the command: 'March.' Soon after, this main body was followed by about fifty other men. On the morning of the 10th of June, Mr. Rolleston, a magistrate, went from Nottingham, on the road towards Eastwood, about six miles from Nottingham, and meeting there a considerable body of men armed with pikes, he returned to Nottingham, and procured some troops from the barracks, eighteen privates, commanded by a captain and a subaltern. Upon hearing that the soldiers were coming, the insurgents fled. The captain in command of the hussars, deposed that the military were kept on the alert during the night. He was ordered out with a party, on the road towards Derbyshire, about six in the morning, and approached about sixty men near Eastwood, who fled across the fields. A man in the road tried to form them, but they paid no attention to him. A number of prisoners were taken, and about forty guns and other arms were collected together.

Thus ended 'the Derbyshire insurrection.' For these offences, three men were executed; eleven were transported

* This is the distinct evidence of the manager of the works. The Dean of Norwich says that, when they arrived at the Butterley ironworks, their numbers amounted to 500. Biography, as well as history, should have regard to accuracy.

for life; four were transported for fourteen years; and five were imprisoned for various terms.

There is one piece of evidence connected with these transactions which the Dean of Norwich has overlooked—the evidence of Samuel Bamford, a poor weaver, but a man of considerable talent and unquestionable honesty—a man who has now a keen sense of his early mistakes, and a conviction that 'no redemption for the masses can exist, save one that should arise from their own virtue and knowledge.' Bamford was arrested on a suspicion of high treason, and was delivered to the custody of the king's messengers on the 30th of March, who conveyed him from Manchester to London. He was five times examined before the Privy Council; and he describes these examinations as being conducted by Lord Sidmouth with the greatest patience and kindness. He was finally discharged on the 30th of April. Soon after Bamford's return to Middleton, he found that private meetings had been held in his absence, and suspicious intrigues carried on; that Joseph Mitchell, an old acquaintance, and a stranger, were the chief movers in these proceedings. One day, there came to him an old man, who had been his co-delegate to London from Derby, and a tall decent-looking young man, much like a town's weaver. The old man said a delegate meeting was to be held in Yorkshire, which would cause a finishing blow to be levelled at the borough-mongers; and that a man from Middleton, whose name he gave, and who had attended several previous meetings, was particularly wanted on the present occasion—concluding by asking Bamford to direct him to that man. Bamford suspected mischief, and pretended not to know such a man. He was suspicious of the designs of the stranger, who had been about Middleton, and had even inquired for him after his discharge. Bamford advised the old man to pause; but he 'huffed at the advice.' The old man was Thomas Bacon, one of those who were arraigned at Derby, and transported for life; the young man was William Turner, who was executed with Brandreth and Ludlam. Bamford thus concludes this narrative: 'The *stranger* whom Joseph Mitchell had so assiduously introduced amongst the discontented classes of Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Derbyshire, first inveigled

them into treasonable associations, then to armed insurrections, and then betrayed them. That stranger, that betrayer, reader, was Oliver, the spy.'

The acquittal of Watson, for high treason, took place on the 16th of June. It appears to have had no influence on the measures of government. The second suspension of the Habeas Corpus was passed by large majorities in both Houses; and the prince-regent, in his speech closing this session on the 12th of July, averred that 'a favourable change was happily taking place in the internal situation of the country, which was to be mainly ascribed to the salutary measures which parliament had adopted for procuring the public tranquillity.' The private records of Lord Sidmouth's life show that he had no great confidence in 'the favourable change.' At the end of July, Lord Sidmouth established his family at Malvern, intending to remain there a short time himself '*and then back*,' as he said, '*to sedition and treason again*;' his under-secretary being left in charge during the interim. Before his lordship's departure, however, as he informed his brother on the 20th, he 'revised all the cases of persons committed and detained under the Suspension Act; and the result, he trusted, would be the release of some upon their own recognizance, and increased indulgence to those who could not be released.' How stands the balance, then, of 'sedition and treason,' on the part of the people, and 'the salutary measures for preserving the public tranquillity,' on the part of the government? Watson was acquitted of high treason, alleged against him for his absurd and guilty participation in the Spa-fields riots which formed so important a matter of the first reports of the secret committee. Three others of the Spa-fields conspirators indicted with him were discharged; the younger Watson had eluded all pursuit. The persons imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle and Glasgow jail on the charge of treason, seventeen in number, were set at liberty in July, receiving seven shillings each to carry them home. The Yorkshire insurrection thus terminated. 'The trials of the state prisoners, as they have been called, closed at York this day August 22nd; and of the twenty-four persons against whom the government solicitor was instructed to institute prosecutions, ten have

been pronounced not guilty; against eleven others no bills were found; and one has been liberated on bail; leaving only two of the whole number in confinement, and these two have been detained without trial by a secretary of state's warrant under the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act.' The Manchester Blanketeers were all discharged, in spite of the opinion of the Duke of Northumberland, expressed to Lord Sidmouth by letter on the 21st of March, that the French Revolution was to be acted over again in England: 'I am sure my lord, the intended march of the delegates from Manchester to London must too forcibly have reminded your lordship of the march of the Marseillois to Paris at the commencement of the French Revolution, not to have convinced your lordship that the copy must have been at least recommended by some person deeply concerned in the original.' These were the excitements of the fears of the great and the rich, that kept the secretary of state in a fever about plots, and 'sedition and treason.' He was a courageous man, and what is called a consistent man. He was complimented on every side about his 'public exertions.' Whatever of peaceful and happy prospects remained in the country were to be attributed to his 'firmness and prompt exertions in keeping down the democrats.' Sedition and treason had become associated in his own mind with his own importance. He was anxious to discharge his duty; and he saw only one path before him—the detection and punishment of democratic movements. He lived in an atmosphere of plots. On the 7th of October there were 'extraordinary circumstances' which would prevent him making another excursion that year. This was a plot to attack the Tower on the 11th of October. The plan, as we learn by a private letter to Lord Sidmouth on the 13th, was in imitation of that of Despard, and a number of persons met accordingly on Tower-hill, but retired and dispersed. No other record exists of this plot that we can discover. With the Derby insurrections, therefore, must the historian be content, if he desire to bring forward a permanent example of the triumphs of government over the rebellious designs that frightened the isle from its propriety. And yet it would appear that the course of these trials was not entirely

satisfactory to all in authority, as they certainly were not to the nation in general. Lord Colchester writes to Lord Sidmouth on the 26th of October: 'I cannot refrain from expressing my great satisfaction at the issue of the Derby trials, as most important to the country, in dispelling the mischievous delusion that high treason was an offence for which low persons were not punishable.' We have great doubts whether such a mischievous delusion ever existed. We know that when the Cato-street conspirators were brought to their just punishment, there was one universal feeling of satisfaction throughout the land, without regard to their being low persons. But we also know that the executions at Derby—with the exception of that of Brandreth, who had dyed his hands in blood—left a permanent conviction upon the minds, not only of low persons, but of a large number of the best informed and the most influential in the midland districts, that these unhappy men were state victims. There was a profound belief that the ignorant violence of these deluded creatures was criminal, but that it was not high treason. Lord Colchester intimates that some in high places held the same belief: 'Also, I do most exceedingly rejoice, for the sake of my friend, the secretary of state, that his judgment has been finally vindicated against all those hesitating and timid counsels which would have inclined to discountenance these proceedings, burying the reputation of the government in irredeemable disgrace.' A discriminating lenity in this solitary case of condemnation by a jury, might, as it appears to us at the end of thirty years, have redeemed some little of the disgrace which must for ever attach to the alarm system of 1817.

CHAPTER X.

Prosecutions for Libel—Hone's Trials.

On moving the second reading of the Habeas Corpus Suspension Bill, Lord Sidmouth made the following statement: 'Some noble lords had complained that prosecutions had not been instituted against the authors, printers, or publishers of infamous libels; but it was but justice to government to state, that they had not neglected their duty with regard to these publications. As soon as they reached the hands of ministers, they were transmitted to the law-officers of the crown, who felt that these publications were drawn up with so much dexterity—the authors had so profited by former lessons of experience—that greater difficulties to conviction presented themselves than at any former time.' Within a month from this declaration Lord Sidmouth intrusted the administration of the law of libel to less scrupulous hands than the law-officers of the crown. On the 27th of March, the secretary of state addressed his famous circular-letter to the lords-lieutenant of counties, in which, urging the importance of preventing the circulation of blasphemous and seditious pamphlets, he stated that he had obtained the opinion of the law-officers, that 'a justice of the peace may issue a warrant to apprehend a person charged before him, upon oath, with the publication of libels of the nature in question, and compel him to give bail to answer the charge.' He called, therefore, upon the lords-lieutenant to communicate this opinion at the ensuing quarter-sessions, so that all magistrates might act thereupon. Such a proceeding as this was perhaps the most daring invasion of public liberty that had been attempted since the time of the Stuarts. It called forth from Lord Grey, on the 12th of May, one of the most luminous speeches which that statesman ever delivered. One passage may be fitly quoted: 'In all the varieties of writing which

may constitute the offence of libel, what is more difficult to be decided than the question of their guilt or innocence? What more exposed to the influence of undue motives in its decision? It has been formerly stated, by some of the most eminent persons in the profession of the law, nay, by almost all of them, to be so nice and difficult a question, that it could not be safely left even to a special jury; that they were only to find the fact of publication; and that the criminality of the writing as a question of law, was exclusively for the decision of the court. This, my lords, was long contended for, and long acted upon as law; till, happily for the freedom of the press, and for the liberty of the country, of which the press is the great palladium, by the perseverance of my noble and learned friend (Lord Erskine), and by the exertions of the man whom, in public life, I most loved and admired (Mr. Fox), that principle was at length exploded; and by the Libel Bill it was at last established, that in prosecutions for libel, both the law and the fact were within the province of the jury, and to be determined by them. But, my lords, what avails this just and beneficent statute—what security is there either for the freedom of the press, or the liberty of the subject—if, whilst you have imposed this salutary restraint upon the judges in trials for libel, you give to them, and to justices of the peace, before trial, a right to decide that difficult question; and to commit to prison—in many instances, perhaps, to inflict a severer punishment than the court upon conviction would adjudge—upon a charge which, after all, may turn out to have had no foundation, but in the false interpretation of words perfectly innocent, by the justice before whom the charge was brought? . . . . If such be the power of the magistrate, and if this be the law, where, I ask, are all the boasted securities of our independence and freedom?' The House of Lords was indifferent to the preservation of these boasted securities. Writing, four months after this debate, to the Bishop of Durham, Lord Sidmouth says, 'The attempt to check the progress of treason and blasphemy, by apprising the magistrates that they had the power of apprehending and holding to bail the publishers or vendors of either, was one of the charges brought against me in the course of the last

session. Such a charge it shall be my constant endeavour to deserve; and I am happy in being able to assure your lordship that the activity of the itinerant dealers in these articles is materially controlled, and their number greatly diminished.' We apprehend that there cannot be the slightest doubt in most minds, at the present day, that this proceeding of Lord Sidmouth was most unconstitutional; and that he speaks and writes in defence of his conduct, with all the self-approval of the worst political bigot of the worst periods of tyranny. Truly did Sir Samuel Romilly say, in the discussion of the same question: 'By the constitution of this country there are only two modes in which the law, in matters of doubt, can be declared: one is, by the whole legislature, by a declaratory statute; the other, by the decisions of the judges upon points which have come judicially before them. It has been at all times thought of the utmost importance to prevent the law from being in any other way declared, and particularly to guard against the crown presuming to declare it. . . . . The circular, resting on the opinion of the law-officers, had declared the laws of the land on a point that was before doubtful; and the secretary of state, assisted by such advice as he could command, had thus assumed the functions of legislation.'

It is difficult to imagine a more degraded and dangerous position than that in which every political writer was placed during the year 1817. In the first place, he was subject, by a secretary of state's warrant, to be imprisoned upon suspicion, under the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. Secondly, he was open to an *ex-officio* information, under which he would be compelled to find bail, or be imprisoned. This power was extended so as to compel bail, by an act of 1808; but from 1808 to 1811, during which three years forty such informations were laid, only one person was held to bail. In 1817 numerous *ex-officio* informations were filed, and the almost invariable practice was to hold the alleged offender to bail, or in default to commit to prison. Under this act Mr. Hone and others were committed to prison during this year. To complete this triple cord with which the ministers believed they could bind down the 'man-mountain' of the

press, came forth Lord Sidmouth's circular. The entire course of these proceedings was a signal failure. There was only one solitary instance of success—William Cobbett ran away. On the 28th of March he fled to America, suspending the publication of his *Register* for four months. In his farewell paper he thus explains his motive for this new Hegira: 'Lord Sidmouth was "sorry to say" that I had not written anything that the law-officers could prosecute with any chance of success. I do not remove for the purpose of writing libels, but for the purpose of being able to write what is not libellous. I do not retire from the combat with the attorney-general, but from a combat with a dungeon, deprived of pen, ink, and paper. A combat with the attorney-general is quite unequal enough. That, however, I would have encountered. I know too well what a trial by special jury is. Yet that, or any sort of trial, I would have stayed to face. So that I could be sure of a trial of whatever sort, I would have run the risk. But, against the absolute power of imprisonment without even a hearing, for time unlimited, in any jail in the kingdom, without the use of pen, ink, and paper, and without any communication with any soul but the keepers —against such a power it would have been worse than madness to attempt to strive.' It may be easy to call this apprehension cowardice; but there can be no doubt that Cobbett was the most dreaded of all the political writers of that time, by those who were terrified at the name of parliamentary reform. They were especially in fear of those of whose 'dexterity' Lord Sidmouth complained. Cobbett went unscathed. The terrors of the law were reserved for more incautious and feebler delinquents.

On the 12th of May, Earl Grey mentioned in the House of Lords that a Mr. Hone was proceeded against for publishing some blasphemous parody; but he had read one of the same nature, written, printed, and published some years ago by other people, without any notice having been officially taken of it. The parody to which Earl Grey alluded, and a portion of which he recited, was Canning's famous parody, 'Praise Lepaux'—an imitation of the Benedicite, and of passages in Job—which was published in the *Anti-Jacobin;* and he asked whether the

authors, be they in the cabinet or in any other place, would also be found out and visited with the penalties of the law. This hint to the obscure publisher against whom these *ex-officio* informations had been filed for blasphemous and seditious parodies, was effectually worked out by him in the solitude of his prison, and in the poor dwelling where he had surrounded himself, as he had done from his earliest years, with a collection of odd and curious books, from which he had gathered an abundance of knowledge that was destined to perplex the technical acquirements of the attorney-general, to whom the sword and buckler of his precedents was wholly useless, and to change the determination of the boldest judge in the land, to convict at any rate, into the prostration of helpless despair. Altogether the three trials of William Hone are amongst the most remarkable in our constitutional history. They produced more distinct effects upon the temper of the country than any public proceedings of that time. They taught the government a lesson which has never been forgotten, and to which, as much as to any other cause, we owe the prodigious improvement as to the law of libel itself, and the use of the law, in our own day—an improvement which leaves what is dangerous in the press to be corrected by the remedial power of the press itself; and which, instead of lamenting over the newly acquired ability of the masses to read seditious and irreligious works, depends upon the general diffusion of this ability as the surest corrective of the evils that are incident even to the best gift of heaven—that of knowledge. Wisely did our Milton say: 'They are not skilful considerers of human things, who imagine to remove sin by removing the matter of sin.' The course that the 'not skilful considerers of human things' took in 1817, was a course that they might have avoided had they listened to a great political teacher of two centuries before them: 'The punishing of wits enhances their authority; and a forbidden writing is thought to be a certain spark of truth that flies up in the faces of them who seek to tread it out.'

On the morning of the 18th of December there is a considerable crowd round the avenues of Guildhall. An obscure bookseller, a man of no substance or respectability

in worldly eyes, is to be tried for libel. He vends his wares in a little shop in the Old Bailey, where there are, strangely mingled, twopenny political pamphlets, and old harmless folios that the poor publisher keeps for his especial reading as he sits in his dingy back-parlour. The door-keepers and officers of the court scarcely know what is going to happen; for the table within the bar has not the usual covering of crimson bags, but ever and anon a dingy boy arrives with an armful of books of all ages and sizes, and the whole table is strewed with dusty and tattered volumes that the ushers are quite sure have no law within their mouldy covers. A middle-aged man—a bland and smiling man—with a half-sad, half-merry twinkle in his eye—a seedy man, to use an expressive word, whose black coat is wondrous brown and threadbare—takes his place at the table, and begins to turn over the books which were his heralds. Sir Samuel Shepherd, the attorney-general, takes his seat, and looks compassionately, as was his nature to do, at the pale man in threadbare black. Mr. Justice Abbot arrives in due time; a special jury is sworn; the pleadings are opened; and the attorney-general states the case against William Hone, for printing and publishing an impious and profane libel upon the Catechism, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, thereby bringing into contempt the Christian religion. 'It may be said,' argued the attorney-general, 'that the defendant's object was not to produce this effect. I believe that he meant it, in one sense, as a political squib; but his responsibility is not the less.' As the attorney-general proceeded to read passages from the parody upon the Catechism, the crowd in court laughed: the bench was indignant; and the attorney-general said, the laugh was the fullest proof of the baneful effect of the defendant's publication. And so the trial went on in the smoothest way, and the case for the prosecution was closed. Then the pale man in black rose, and with a faltering voice set forth the difficulty he had in addressing the court, and how his poverty prevented him obtaining counsel. And now he began to warm in the recital of what he thought his wrongs; his commitments—his hurried calls to plead—the expense of copies of the infor-

mations against him; and as Mr. Justice Abbot, with perfect gentleness, but with his cold formality, interrupted him, the timid man, who all thought would have mumbled forth a hasty defence, grew bolder and bolder, and in a short time had possession of his audience, as if he were 'some well-graced actor' who was there to receive the tribute of popular admiration. 'They were not to inquire whether he were a member of the established church, or a dissenter; it was enough that he professed himself to be a Christian; and he would be bold to say that he made that profession with a reverence for the doctrines of Christianity which could not be exceeded by any person in that court. He had his books about him, and it was from them that he must draw his defence. They had been the solace of his life. He was too much attached to his books to part with them. As to parodies, they were as old at least as the invention of printing; and he never heard of a prosecution for a parody, either religious or any other. There were two kinds of parodies: one in which a man might convey ludicrous or ridiculous ideas relative to some other subject: the other, where it was meant to ridicule the thing parodied. This latter was not the case here, and therefore he had not brought religion into contempt.' This was the gist of William Hone's defence. To show fully how this argument was worked — with what readiness, what coolness, what courage—would be to transcribe the trials of three days; on the first of which the defendant spoke six hours; on the second, seven hours; and on the last eight hours. It was in vain that the attorney-general urged that to bring forward any previous parody was the same thing as if a person charged with obscenity should produce obscene volumes in his defence. It was in vain that Mr. Justice Abbot repeated his wish that the defendant would not read such things. On he went, till interruption was held to be in vain. It was worse than vain; it was unjust. Truly did Hone reply to Mr. Justice Abbot: 'My lord, your lordship's observation is in the very spirit of what Pope Leo X. said to Martin Luther—"For God's sake don't say a word about the indulgences and the monasteries, and I'll give you a living;" thus precluding him

from mentioning the very thing in dispute. I must go on with the parodies, or I cannot go on with my defence.' Undauntedly he went on, from the current literature of the time, such as grave lawyers read in their few hours of recreation, to the forgotten volumes of old theology and polemical controversy, that the said grave lawyers of modern days are accustomed to regard as useless lumber. The editor of *Blackwood's Magazine* was a parodist—he parodied a chapter of Ezekiel; Martin Luther was a parodist—he parodied the first psalm; Bishop Latimer was a parodist, and so was Dr. Boys, Dean of Canterbury; the author of the *Rolliad* was a parodist; and so was Mr. Canning. Passage after passage did Mr. Hone read from author after author. He thought it was pretty clear that Martin Luther did not mean to ridicule the Psalms; that Dr. Boys did not mean to ridicule the Lord's Prayer; that Mr. Canning did not mean to ridicule the Scriptures. Why, then, should it be presumed that he had such an intention? As soon as he found that his parodies had been deemed offensive, he had suppressed them; and that he had done long before his prosecution. It was in vain that the attorney-general replied that Martin Luther was a libeller, and Dr. Boys was a libeller. The judge charged the jury in vain, William Hone was acquitted, after a quarter of an hour's deliberation.

But Guildhall 'saw another sight.' With the next morning's fog, the fiery lord chief-justice rose from his bed, and with lowering brow took his place in that judgment-seat which he deemed had been too mercifully filled on the previous day. The mild firmness of the poor publisher, and his gentlemanly sense of the absence of harshness in the conduct of his first trial, had won for him something like respect; and when on one occasion Mr. Justice Abbot asked him to forbear reading a particular parody, and the defendant said: 'Your lordship and I understand each other, and we have gone on so good-humouredly hitherto, that I will not break in upon our harmony,' it became clear that the puisne judge was not the man to enforce a verdict of guilty on the second trial. Again Mr. Hone entered the court with his load of books, on Friday, the 19th of December. He was this

day indicted for publishing an impious and profane libel, called *The Litany, or General Supplication.* Again the attorney-general affirmed that whatever might be the object of the defendant, the publication had the effect of scoffing at the public service of the church. Again the defendant essayed to read from his books, which course he contended was essentially necessary for his defence. Then began a contest which is perhaps unparalleled in an English court of justice. Upon Mr. Fox's Libel Bill, upon *ex-officio* informations, upon his right to copies of the indictment without extravagant charges, the defendant battled his judge—imperfect in his law, no doubt, but with a firmness and moderation that rode over every attempt to put him down. Parody after parody was again produced, and especially those parodies of the litany which the Cavaliers employed so frequently as vehicles of satire upon the Roundheads and Puritans. The lord chief-justice at length gathered up his exhausted strength for his charge; and concluded in a strain that left but little hope for the defendant: 'He would deliver the jury his solemn opinion, as he was required by act of parliament to do; and under the authority of that act, and still more in obedience to his conscience and his God, he pronounced this to be a most impious and profane libel. Believing and hoping that they, the jury, were Christians, he had not any doubt but that they would be of the same opinion.' The jury, in an hour and a half, returned a verdict of Not Guilty.

It might have been expected that these prosecutions would have here ended. But the chance of a conviction from a third jury, upon a third indictment, was to be risked. On the 20th of December, Lord Ellenborough again took his seat on the bench, and the exhausted defendant came late into court, pale and agitated. The attorney-general remarked upon his appearance, and offered to postpone the proceedings. The courageous man made his election to go on. This third indictment was for publishing a parody on the creed of St. Athanasius, called *The Sinecurist's Creed.* After the attorney-general had finished his address, Mr. Hone asked for five minutes' delay, to arrange the few thoughts he had been commit-

ting to paper. The judge refused the small concession; but said that he would postpone the proceedings to another day, if the defendant would request the court so to do. The scene which ensued was thoroughly dramatic. 'No! I make no such request. My lord, I am very glad to see your lordship here to-day, because I feel I sustained an injury from your lordship yesterday—an injury which I did not expect to sustain. . . . . If his lordship should think proper, on this trial to-day, to deliver his opinion, I hope that opinion will be coolly and dispassionately expressed by his lordship. . . . . My lord, I think it necessary to make a stand here. I cannot say what your lordship may consider to be necessary interruption; but your lordship interrupted me a great many times yesterday, and then said you would interrupt me no more, and yet your lordship did interrupt me afterwards ten times as much. . . . . Gentlemen, it is you who are trying me to-day. His lordship is no judge of me. You are my judges, and you only are my judges. His lordship sits there to receive your verdict. . . . . I will not say what his lordship did yesterday; but I trust his lordship to-day will give his opinion coolly and dispassionately, without using either expression or gesture which could be construed as conveying an entreaty to the jury to think as he did. I hope the jury will not be beseeched into a verdict of guilty.' The triumph of the weak over the powerful was complete. 'The frame of adamant and soul of fire,' as the biographer of Lord Sidmouth terms the chief-justice, quailed before the indomitable courage of a man who was roused into energies which would seem only to belong to the master-spirits that have swayed the world. Yet this was a man who, in the ordinary business of life, was incapable of enterprise and persevering exertion; who lived in the nooks and corners of his antiquarianism; who was one that even his old political opponents came to regard as a gentle and innocuous hunter after 'all such reading as was never read; who in a few years gave up his politics altogether, and, devoting himself to his old poetry and his old divinity, passed a quarter of a century after this conflict in peace with all mankind, and died the sub-editor of a religious journal. It was towards the close of

this remarkable trial, that the judge, who came eager to condemn, sued for pity to his intended victim. The defendant quoted Warburton and Tillotson, as doubters of the authenticity of the Athanasian creed. 'Even his lordship's father, the Bishop of Carlisle, he believed, took a similar view of the creed.' And then the judge solemnly said: 'Whatever that opinion was, he has gone, many years ago, where he has had to account for his belief and his opinions. . . . . For common delicacy forbear.'—'Oh, my lord, I shall certainly forbear.' Grave and temperate was the charge to the jury this day; and in twenty minutes they returned a verdict of Not Guilty.

On Sunday, the 21st of December, the day after this last trial, Lord Ellenborough wrote thus to Lord Sidmouth: 'The disgraceful events which have occurred at Guildhall within the last three or four days have led me, both on account of the public and myself, to consider very seriously my own sufficiency, particularly in point of bodily health and strength, to discharge the official duties of my station in the manner in which, at the present critical moment, it is peculiarly necessary they should be discharged. . . . . I wish to carry my meditated purpose of resignation into effect, as soon as the convenience of government, in regard to the due selection and appointment of my successor, may allow.'

We have said the proceedings of the government in the libel matters of 1817 were signal failures. A few miserable hawkers were held to bail, or sent to prison, under Lord Sidmouth's circular; some *ex-officio* informations were filed, with only one conviction—that of a printer in the country, who republished one of Hone's parodies, and was tried before Hone himself. As to the three acquittals we have described, it is perfectly evident that three juries, consisting of respectable London merchants, would have assuredly convicted the defendant, had they not felt that the real sting of the alleged profaneness was the severity of the political satire. Although the indictment stated that these parodies were seditious as well as profane, the sedition was studiously kept in the background. Had they not been really prosecuted for their political doctrines, their unquestionable

indecency and impropriety must have carried a verdict against them on the first trial. The second and third trials looked like persecution; and public opinion threw its shield over the offender.

A letter from Mr. Ward (Lord Dudley) to the Bishop of Llandaff, exhibits a striking example of the difference of opinion that existed in high quarters as to the prosecution of Hone. The personal friend of George Canning, writing to a most pious and learned dignitary of the church, responds to the sentiments of that dignitary that this transaction was uncalled for and oppressive. 'I am particularly gratified with what you say about the business of Hone. It is an additional proof, if any were wanting, of your superiority to those prejudices with which place and profession might have inspired a man of less sound understanding, and a less independent character. I have been inclined all along to think, and what you say confirms me in the opinion, that the prosecution was discreditable to the government and its law advisers. Not that I believe they were actuated by tyrannical principles. It was a mere blunder; but the success of it would have afforded a very mischievous precedent for bad times. Certainly this man meant no good either to church or state; and that is reason enough for the whole race of methodistical Tories —who are guided entirely by their own feelings as to the particular case, without any regard to, or knowledge of, the general principles of justice—to be sadly grieved that his ears were not cropped, as they would have been by the Star-Chamber. That famous tribunal no doubt had its merits. It punished many scoundrels that could not have been got at by a regular course of law, and was therefore an object of admiration so long as it lasted, and of regret when it fell, to precisely the same sort of persons that now mourn over the acquittal of Hone.'

CHAPTER XI.

Death of the Princess Charlotte—Sinecures—Roman Catholic Claims—Parliamentary Reform.

The death of the presumptive heiress of the British crown after the birth of a dead child, was the great historical event of 1817. Never was a whole nation plunged in such deep and universal grief. From the highest to the lowest, this death was felt as a calamity that demanded the intense sorrow of domestic misfortune. Around every fireside there were suppressed tears and bitter remembrances. The most solemn disclaimer was uttered, through this universal mourning, of the foul calumny against the people, that they were desirous of a vital change in their laws and institutions. Whatever might be their complaints, they showed, on this occasion, that their attachment to a constitutional monarchy was undiminished by factious contests or real grievances; and that they looked with exulting hopes to the days when a patriot queen should diffuse the sunlight of just government through every corner of a prosperous and happy land.

The affection which the people of Great Britain cherished for the Princess Charlotte was ardent, but it was discriminating. It was a tribute to principles and to conduct. It was something much better than that unreflecting gallantry which would have called 'a thousand swords from their scabbards' to have defended personal charms; it was the admiration of private virtue disciplining itself for public service. The Princess Charlotte seemed born to build up for generations the succession to the British crown, by calling around her own person the warmest devotion of a zealous but a reflecting people. A female sovereign can best make duty choice, and obedience happiness. What the birth of this princess promised, her education ripened, and her own love of real glory perfected. Her early years were devoted to an assiduous

preparation for her maturer honours. Her studies were manly, and such as befitted the probable successor to the glories of an Elizabeth. She was disciplined in the school of religion and of philosophy. While she was habituated to those Christian exercises, in the performance of which the reigning sovereign and his family furnished so excellent an example, she stored up lessons for future practice in her probable destiny, by a ceaseless contemplation of the characters of the truly great of all ages and countries. She knew the fountains of her country's glory, she reverenced the founders of its well-balanced constitution; her heart vowed an early allegiance to her nation's liberty. In the cultivation of the accomplishments of her sex, while she displayed an almost unlimited talent, she never lost sight of their legitimate ends and uses. Her exercises and her amusements were equally associated with her preparation for domestic and public duties. The people exulted in the maturity of her person and her mind. She stood, as was hoped amongst her future subjects, a beautiful, an accomplished, a noble-hearted woman. She seemed equally fitted to command reverence by the strength, and win affection by the graces, of her mind. Her state was not supported by ostentation; her greatness was not asserted by pride; her dignity did not estrange her from the lowly and the poor. Raised above the great portion of society, she deeply felt her alliance with the universal family of the earth; and while her endeavour was to purify herself from the follies and weaknesses of mankind, she delighted to partake their sympathies, to assuage their misfortunes, to merit, by her benevolence, the homage which was paid to her rank.

A princess so gifted was not a being that would permit her affections to be sacrificed at the altar of political calculation. She well knew that domestic happiness is the best foundation for public virtue. She felt that in the tranquillity of connubial enjoyment, the heart has no repining cares to interrupt the search for truth—no restless anticipations or regrets, to turn the thoughts away from active duty or contemplative preparation. She wisely asserted her own right to choose for herself in the most important action of her life. The nation hailed and reverenced her

motives. The prince of her choice brought neither extent of territory, nor continental influence; but he brought an unsophisticated mind—an active, firm, inquiring, and amiable temper—a meek and affectionate heart. Their tastes were alike; their happiness was alike. In dignified retirement they lived calmly and unobtrusively, in that enviable tranquillity which is so congenial to British feeling. Their amusements were elegant and simple; their exercises of duty were habitual and uniform. In the pursuit of health and of knowledge, their days passed away in that serenity which devotion and benevolence stimulated and confirmed. A glorious prospect was open to them of passing the summer of life in the discipline of domestic virtue, and the autumn in a far more extended exercise of the same principles. These hopes perished in an hour!

Thirty years ago, when 'without the slightest warning, without the opportunity of a moment's immediate preparation, in the midst of the deepest tranquillity, at midnight a voice was heard in the palace, not of singing-men and singing-women, not of revelry and mirth, but the cry, Behold the bridegroom cometh'—the nation first wept, and then grew angry. There had been neglect, at any rate. The greatest in the land had been less helped in her need, it was affirmed, than the humblest peasant-wife. Lord Eldon used to relate that, after the labour was over, he 'went into the room where the surgeons were consulting what bulletin of the princess they should send, and they had actually drawn one up, stating that she was going on as favourably as possible, when Baillie came in, and, after reading it, he refused to sign it, for such was not his opinion. We [the cabinet ministers] returned to our homes about two o'clock in the morning, and before six a messenger arrived to let us know the princess was dead.' Sir Richard Croft, against whom the public odium was chiefly directed, became in a few months after his own self-destroyer.

Amongst the fears that accompanied the death of the Princess Charlotte, was the apprehension that 'a barren sceptre' might pass through the hands of the illustrious family that freed these realms from a despotic sway. That

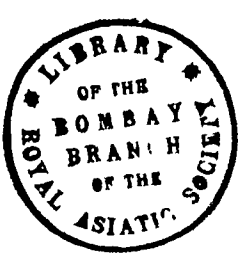
apprehension was dissipated by the subsequent marriages of the Dukes of Clarence, Kent, Cumberland, and Cambridge. It is a remarkable example of the vanity of human fears, that the people who wept, as a people without hope, for the bereavement of Charlotte Augusta, should have realised, through her premature death, precisely such a female reign, of just and mild government, of domestic virtues, of generous sympathy with popular rights, of bold and liberal encouragement of sound improvement, as they had associated with her career—perhaps more than they had thought, in that season of disquiet, could ever be realised in a few coming years.

In the pleasing record of those years which were years of progress, we shall not have to enumerate the year 1817. It has left not the slightest trace of public good. At the beginning of the session, ministers sanctioned the appointment of a finance committee. In three months the committee brought forward a measure for the gradual abolition of sinecures, which Lord Castlereagh supported, because it would not diminish the influence of the crown; would produce no large reduction of expense; but would convince the people that parliament was doing everything possible to relieve their burdens. It appeared that savings were to be effected by the abolition of sinecures to the amount of £51,000; instead of which the committee recommended the substitution of a pension-list to the amount of £42,000. This bitter mockery of the public expectations was a new source of discontent.

The Roman Catholic claims were debated at great length during this session. Of the debate on the 9th of May, Mr. Wilberforce makes this brief entry in his diary: 'Roman Catholic question decided. I would not speak. Canning poor—Peel excellent—Lord Castlereagh very good.' The debate occupies a hundred columns of Hansard's Reports. We reserve for another occasion a general view of the course of this great question. The majority against the Roman Catholics, in 1817, was twenty-four.

From this year we may date the retrogression of the cause of parliamentary reform, which continued to go back, or stand still, as long as the middle classes were afraid of its agitation. Writing to a friend in 1817, Mr.

Wilberforce says: 'I continue friendly to the moderate, gradual, and almost insensibly operating parliamentary reform, which was last brought forward by Mr. Pitt. I am firmly persuaded that at present a prodigious majority of the more intelligent people of this country are adverse to the measure. In my view, so far from being an objection to the discussion, this is rather a recommendation of it. But it is a serious and very strong objection to its present consideration, that the efforts of certain demagogues have had too much success in influencing the minds of the lowest of the people in several of our manufacturing districts, most falsely persuading them that the evils under which we at present labour are owing to the state of our parliamentary representation, and that they would be cured by a parliamentary reform.' The rash movements of the operative classes in 1816—their violent declamations, their tumultuous meetings—proceeded in most cases from an ignorant but honest spirit. They had been taught, as some demagogues still continue to teach, that all the evils of civilisation are political evils. A few scoundrels, a few spies, and a few zealots of the operative class, placed the weapon of alarm in the hands of the government of 1817; and, what was more, laid the foundation for those miserable conflicts and mutual suspicions, on the part of the capitalists and the labourers, which are still amongst the most serious obstacles to all large mitigations of the inequalities of society, however we may all be improved in the common wish for Christian brotherhood.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CHAPTER XII.*

India—Pindarree War—Mahratta Wars.

THE period at which we are arrived was remarkable for a series of achievements in India, under the administration of the Marquis of Hastings, at that time Earl of Moira. His lordship was nominated governor-general on the 18th of November 1812, and, arriving in India, Lord Minto resigned the government to him on the 4th of October 1813. He was obliged to attend almost immediately to matters of war, for the Birmans, or Burmese, continued to trouble one of the frontiers of our empire, while the Nepaulese made encroachments on another. The Birmans were brought to reason for the present; but the Nepaulese spurned negotiation, and were to be reduced only by force. The Goorkhas, who domineered over a great part of Nepaul, retained that passion for war and conquest to which they owed their recently established dominion, and by which they hoped to extend their empire in Hindostan. Their far-extended frontier pressed everywhere upon the territories of the Company, or the territory of the Company's allies or dependents; and except in the neighbourhood of our military stations, it was found difficult or almost impossible to check the border forays of the Nepaulese, or the quarrels that were constantly breaking out. In the month of May 1814, while some negotiations were still pending, the Nepaulese treacherously attacked and murdered all the police-officers stationed in Bootwul. The Earl of Moira determined to send armies to deal with these troublesome neighbours, and, after two campaigns, they were effectually subdued.

In the meanwhile our Indian armies were drawn into the field by new enemies. The Pindarrees were not a

* This chapter is abridged from Mr. MacFarlane's able work, *Our Indian Empire.*

distinctive race, but a numerous class of men of different races, religions, and habits, gradually associating and assimilated by a common pursuit. They were all horsemen and all robbers. Their name first occurs in Indian history about the end of the seventeenth century. From obscure freebooters, they rose into sufficient consequence to be deemed useful auxiliaries by the different Mahratta powers, whose desultory mode of warfare was suited to their own habits. From their preceding or accompanying Mahratta armies, the Pindarrees became occasionally confounded with the Mahrattas, though they were always considered by the latter as essentially distinct, and so immeasurably inferior as not to be allowed to eat with them, or even to be seated in their presence. Occasionally the Mahratta rulers purchased their aid by grants of land, or by a tacit admission of their right to possess tracts which they had already usurped. But the more usual price paid for their assistance was the privilege of plundering, even beyond the ordinary licence given to a Mahratta army. At times some of their durras acted for one Mahratta chief, and some on the opposite side for another Mahratta chief; and it occasionally happened that all the durras leagued themselves against the whole Mahratta confederacy, plundering the territories of the Peishwa, Scindia, the Nagpoor rajah, &c., indiscriminately. As the Pindarree chiefs acquired reputation, their claims to the services of their adherents became hereditary, and were transmitted to their descendants. Gangs and tribes were cemented in federal union, and common motives of action led to the establishment of a community of interest throughout the whole of this community of robbers. The very looseness of the composition of their union was favourable to its increase, as it admitted all castes and all faiths, and offered a ready refuge to poverty, indolence, and crime—to all that was floating and unattached in the frequently revolutionised communities of Central India. What their numbers were, could at no time be correctly estimated: they varied with circumstances, being thinned by failure, and swelled by success. 'It is also to be observed,' says Sir John Malcolm, 'that the Pindarrees were fed and nourished by the very miseries they created;

for, as their predatory invasions extended, property became insecure, and those who were ruined by their depredations were afterwards compelled to have recourse to a life of violence, as the only means of subsistence left them. 'They joined the stream which they could not withstand, and endeavoured to redeem their own losses by the plunder of others.' The strategy of these overgrown bodies of banditti will shew at once how difficult it was either to suppress them or intercept them. 'When they set out on an expedition, they placed themselves under the guidance of one or more chosen leaders, called lubburiahs, who were selected on account of their knowledge of the country that it was meant to plunder. The Pindarrees were encumbered neither with tents nor baggage; each horseman carried a few cakes of bread for his own subsistence, and some feeds of grain for his horse. The party, which usually consisted of two or three thousand good horse, with a proportion of mounted followers, advanced at the rapid rate of forty or fifty miles a day, turning neither to the right nor left till they arrived at their place of destination. They then divided and made a sweep of all the cattle and property they could find, committing at the same time the most horrid atrocities, and destroying what they could not carry away. They trusted to the secrecy and suddenness of the irruption for avoiding those who guarded the frontiers of the countries they invaded; and before a force could be brought against them, they were on their return. Their chief strength lay in their being intangible. If pursued, they made marches of extraordinary length—sometimes upwards of sixty miles—by roads almost impracticable for regular troops. If overtaken, they dispersed, and reassembled at an appointed rendezvous; if followed to the country from which they issued, they broke into small parties. Their wealth, their booty; and their families, were scattered over a wide region, in which they found protection amid the mountains and in the fastnesses belonging to themselves, or to those with whom they were either openly or secretly connected; but nowhere did they present any point of attack; and the defeat of a party, the destruction of one of their cantonments, or the temporary occupation of some

of their strongholds, produced no effect beyond the ruin of an individual freebooter, whose place was instantly supplied by another, generally of more desperate fortune, and, therefore, more eager for enterprise. They never fought when they could run away; they considered it wisdom to plunder and fly, but folly to stay and fight. Even when acting with the Mahrattas as auxiliaries, their object was plunder, not war. They went before, indeed, but it was only by surprise or in defenceless provinces; they were, from their very origin, the scavengers of the Mahrattas; and though in the van, they had little more pretension to martial conduct or valour than had the birds and beasts of prey that followed in their and their allies' rear. Some of their chiefs, however, united to the qualities so essential to their profession—activity, cunning, ready enterprise, presence of mind, and promptitude of resources—a wonderful strength of mind, or it might be apathy, in bearing the reverses of fortune and the privations of their lot. Foremost among these chiefs was Cheetoo. This man first attracted the attention of the English towards the end of 1806, when, raising himself on the temporary ruin of Kureem, another Pindarree chief, who had incurred the displeasure of one of the Mahratta potentates, and had been inveigled and made prisoner, he united the durras or bands of many other leaders under his own standard, and prepared to commit depredations on an unprecedentedly grand scale. Numerous and profitable to himself, and altogether ruinous to the inhabitants of many wide districts of Hindostan, were the expeditions undertaken by Cheetoo on his own account. But in 1811, the captive Pindarree, Kureem, purchasing his liberty from the Mahrattas, returned to the scenes of his former power, and soon obtained his former supremacy. To make up for lost time, and to restore his reputation among the robbers, Kureem laid his plans to effect a general combination of all the Pindarree bands, for a predatory expedition more extensive than any that had hitherto been made. Cheetoo was obliged to follow the example of the majority of his fellow-chiefs; and at the great gathering of 1811, his durra made part of 25,000 cavalry of all descriptions, that were ready, under the command of Kureem, to march

against and plunder the city of Nagpoor, the large and populous capital of the Boonsla Mahrattas. But Cheetoo, who continued to hate Kureem as a rival, plotted against him, sold himself to his enemies, and went over to them with all his durra. Not long after this he entirely ruined Kureem, and obliged him to flee with his diminished adherents to a distant country. Cheetoo again shone forth on his rival's eclipse, and at his cantonment near Nemawur, in the province of Malwah, on the north bank of the Nerbudda, no fewer than 15,000 horse annually assembled to issue forth to plunder. As the territories of the Company and those of its protected allies offered the richest booty, the eyes of the Pindarrees were always bent in that direction. This imposed the necessity of constant vigilance along the whole extent of the south-west frontier of the Bengal presidency; while, for the security of the Deccan, the subsidiary forces of the Nizam and Peishwa were annually obliged to move to the frontiers of their respective territories; and notwithstanding all these precautions, those states were constantly penetrated and overrun by the marauders.

The reverses and losses sustained in the first campaign in Nepaul, in 1814, encouraged the Pindarrees. In October 1815, when our main army was fully occupied in forcing the stockades of the Goorkhas, Cheetoo crossed the Nerbudda with nearly 8000 of his Pindarrees. On the southern side of the river they broke into two parties and took opposite routes. Major Fraser, with 300 sepoys and 100 irregular native horse, surprised one of the parties in a bivouac, and made them suffer some loss before they could mount, gallop off, and disperse. But this did not deter them from continuing their depredations as far as the black river, the Krishna or Kistnah. The other party, which had met with no such molestation, traversed the whole of the territory of our ally the Nizam of the Deccan, from north to south, and also appeared on the banks of the Kistnah. These territories of our Madras presidency lay on the other side of the river, and were saved from devastation only by the fortuitous circumstance of the river's continuing not fordable so unusually late in the season as the 20th of November. 'Finding the Kistnah impassable, the

freebooters took a turn eastward, plundering the country for several miles along its populous and fertile banks, and committing every kind of enormity. On approaching the frontier of Masulipatam, they shaped their course northward, and returned along the line of the Godavource (Godavery) and Whurdah, passing to the east of all Colonel Doveton's positions, and making good their route to Nemawur (Cheetoo's head-quarters), with an immense booty collected in the Nizam's dominions, and with utter impunity.' Elated by his success, Cheetoo planned and proclaimed a second lubbur, or raid, immediately upon the return of the first. The Pindarrees again flocked in from every side to join in it; and by the 5th of February 1816, 10,000 horsemen had again crossed the Nerbudda from Nemawur. This time, the Company's territories did not escape. On the 10th of March, leaving plundered and burning villages in their rear, the Pindarrees appeared on the western frontier of the district of Masulipatam, under the Madras presidency. From this point they pressed southward. On the 11th they made a march of thirty-three miles, plundered seventy-two villages, and committed the most horrid cruelties upon the inoffensive and helpless villagers. On the next day they destroyed fifty-four villages, marched thirty-eight miles, and arrived at the civil station of Guntoor. Here they plundered a considerable part of the town, and the houses of all the civil officers; but, steady to their system of never risking life or limb in battle, they shrunk from the collector's office, where the government treasure and the persons of the British residents were protected by a handful of sepoys and invalids. The robbers went off, as they came, suddenly and noiselessly. That night there was not one of them to be seen in the neighbourhood; and before the next day closed, they were more than fifty miles from Guntoor, looking westward for more defenceless villages. They swept through the Kirpah or Cuddapah district, and, after being twelve days within the Company's frontier, they recrossed the Kistnah. A squadron of native cavalry belonging to the Madras establishment reached the opposite bank of the Kistnah, just after they had made good their passage. Further to the west there were numerous

detachments of the Company's troops scouring the country in all directions, yet the plunderers escaped without the least brush. Shortly after recrossing the Kistnah, the marauders broke up into separate bodies. The greater part moved along the north bank of the Kistnah, passing south of Hyderabad, until they approached the Peishwa's dominions. Then, turning short to the north, they retraced their steps to the Nerbudda, in several divisions and by various routes. Colonel Doveton came close up with one of the divisions as it was passing a ghaut, but still the robbers escaped untouched. Another and a larger body was equally fortunate in escaping from the colonel, who had obtained from a Pindarree prisoner a clue to its movements, and who had made sure of cutting it up. It was soon afterwards ascertained that nearly the whole of these Pindarrees who had passed the Nerbudda on the 5th of February had recrossed it before the 17th of May, bringing a second immense harvest of booty to Nemawur within the year. It was ascertained by a commission appointed for the express purpose of the investigation, that, during the twelve days the ferocious banditti remained within the Company's frontiers, three hundred and thirty-nine villages had been plundered, one hundred and eighty-two individuals put to a cruel death, five hundred and five severely wounded, and no less than three thousand six hundred and three subjected to different kinds of torture.

The governor-general obtained certain information that the Peishwa, Scindia, and other Mahratta potentates were in close and friendly correspondence with the robbers, and that Mahratta agents had visited Cheetoo's cantonment at Nemawur, just before the last raid was undertaken; and there was every ground for believing that the new Mahratta confederacy contemplated an invasion of our territories while our main army was engaged in Nepaul, and the rest of our troops in the field occupied in an exhausting and useless pursuit of the Pindarrees. His lordship, who saw the Nepaul war brought to an honourable and advantageous conclusion, at the very moment when both the Mahrattas and the Pindarrees were confidently calculating on its duration, was most eager to employ the

unreduced strength of his armies in the accomplishment of the important object of securing the peace of Central India by the extirpation of the robbers. He had written for the sanction of the home authorities, and had made a second strong representation of the horrors to which the country was exposed; but the sanction he required before commencing operations on a grand scale had not yet arrived. A large part of the Bengal army was, however, kept in advanced cantonments, ready to take the field at any moment. The governor-general at length received the sanction of the home authorities to his scheme for breaking up the confederacy and power of those banditti.

By the end of October 1816, Lieutenant-colonel Walker took up a defensive line on the southern bank of the Nerbudda, with the main body of the subsidiary force which the Company had sent into Nagpoor. This defensive line, being nearly one hundred and fifty miles in length, was loose and weak; but the first appearance of a British army in the valley of the Nerbudda spread consternation among the robbers, and induced Cheetoo to prepare to quit the northern bank of that river, and cross the mountains into Malwah. Perceiving, however, that the troops did not cross the Nerbudda, the Pindarrees recovered confidence; and on the 4th of November they resolved to push small parties between Colonel Walker's posts and round his flanks; and a party crossed the river, and then dividing into two, took different directions. Colonel Walker in attempting to intercept one of the divisions, unexpectedly fell upon the other as it was bivouacking in a jungle; he inflicted some loss; but the nimble robbers were soon in the saddle, and before long they had recrossed the river. On the 13th of November all the durras were in motion. Cheetoo had discovered that Walker's cavalry was all on his left flank, and he therefore threw forward more than five thousand of his well-mounted thieves to turn Walker's right flank. This band, which appears to have been followed by others, crossed the river in sight of the infantry post on the extreme right of our line, and then dashed on with a rapidity which left our infantry no chance of stopping or harassing their march. When collected on the southern side of the Nerbudda, the Pin-

darrees separated into two great bodies. One swept due east, though forests and over mountains, and fell unexpectedly upon the Company's district of Ganjam, the northernmost frontier of the five Circars, with the evident intention of proceeding to Cuttack and Juggernaut, to plunder the rich stronghold of Hindoo superstition, to carry off the idols and the votive-offerings and rich donations of the pilgrims and devotees. But this lubbur was met by a small body of the Company's troops almost as soon as it entered Ganjam, and was driven back with considerable loss. The other lubbur, which had gone off to the southward, rushed into the Nizam's territory before Colonel Doveton could come up with it. It then marched leisurely along, plundering and destroying, until it came near to the town of Beeder, the capital of a province of the Deccan, and about 73 miles north-west from Hyderabad. Here it came to a halt, and its chiefs disagreed as to the further course which ought to be pursued. While the leaders were in this state of indecision, Major Macdowall, who had been detached from Hyderabad, fell upon the lubbur by night with the van party of his light troops, and cut it up completely, although it was six thousand strong, and the first attack made by a mere handful of light cavalry. The robbers abandoned most of their horses and the greater part of their booty, dispersed themselves over the country, and thought of nothing but their personal safety, and of the means of returning to the northern side of the Nerbudda. But one leader, named Sheik Dulloo, indignant at the want of energy and concert betrayed by those who had the chief command, had abandoned this lubbur altogether a few days before Macdowall's exploit, and had gone off with from three to five hundred Pindarrees to act for himself. He dashed across the Peishwa's territory, descended into the Concan, and thence shaped his course due north, plundering the western shores of India, from the 17th to the 21st degree of north latitude, and returning by the valley of the Tapty, and the route of Burhaunpore, the capital of the Khandeish province of the Deccan. This was the only lubbur that met with any success this season. The only loss it sustained from British troops was on its return to the Ner-

budda, in the following March. Here Sheik Dulloo and his people were within a few miles of home, or of Cheetoo's cantonment; but they found the ford by which they had hoped to cross the river guarded by a redoubt occupied by a small party of our sepoys. Several of the robbers were shot in attempting to dash across; but the sheik himself, with his main body and the best mounted followers, retiring from the ford, boldly swam the river lower down, though not without a further loss of men and horses. Those who had worse horses or less courage dispersed, and fled into the jungle on the English side of the Nerbudda, where the greater part of them were cut off by the wild inhabitants of the country. By the various accidents of flood and fire, more than one-half of those who had followed Sheik Dulloo perished; but the rest reached Cheetoo's durra with a rich booty in their saddles. The sheik's fame waxed great: his daring lubbur and his marvellous return became the admired theme of the whole Pindarree world.

Two or three other lubburs had contrived to cross the Nerbudda by passing between the distant posts of Colonel Walker's line; but they met with nothing except hard blows and disappointment. One of them was cut to pieces by the 4th Madras native cavalry, led on by Major Lushington. Making a forced march of more than fifty miles, the greater part by night, Lushington surprised the Pindarrees as they were cooking and eating, and presently strewed the field with some seven or eight hundred of their dead bodies. As the ground was open, the Madras cavalry pursued with good effect. The Ganjam lubbur was almost annihilated on its rapid return homeward; and as the different ghauts and fords by which they must pass in order to get to the north bank of the Nerbudda were by degrees all guarded, very few of the remnants of the other shattered lubburs ever reached their homes. Hosts of them were cut off by our sepoys, and by the people whom they had plundered in their advance. They had been continually fleeing before a handful of men, and had been beaten every time they had been met with. Still, however, their depredations during this campaign or season of 1816–17 had embraced a more ample expanse of territory

than had ever before been attempted, extending from shore to shore of the peninsula of India, and including all the intermediate provinces they had omitted the preceding year.

By this time it was very completely demonstrated that stationary posts of defence could not prevent the Pindarrees from crossing the Nerbudda and getting into our territories; and that it would not be possible to deal properly with those plunderers and murderers, unless our troops advanced into the country north of the Nerbudda, to the 'procreant cradle' of the infamous race.

During the rains of this year the Pindarrees, well knowing that the English were coming against them into the regions beyond the Nerbudda, made great efforts to recruit their durras, and to concert some general plan of defence. But disagreements broke out among the chiefs, particularly between Cheetoo and his old rival Kureem, and no consistent plan could be formed. Their superstitions were alarmed by evil omens, such as a great fire that broke out in Kureem's camp in the month of September, and destroyed all the valuables of his durra. Generally, however, the Pindarrees relied, first on their own rapidity of movement, and next on the potency of the hostile league which they knew to be forming among the Mahrattas against the English. When the rains were over, they made some very unsuccessful atttempts to break into our territories. They were everywhere headed back; and they were soon pressed and pursued, and driven from their haunts beyond the Nerbudda by the several corps of Major-general Marshall and Colonel Sir John Malcolm. The last-named officer, who has written the best account of the Pindarrees, and who had the most active share in the operations which destroyed them, had been absent in England, and had returned just in time to take the command of one of the corps of the Marquis of Hastings's army. Malcolm, being informed of Cheetoo's flight to the westward, resolved to follow him, as the most able and dangerous of the robbers; and he accordingly marched as far as Agur. Here he learned that Cheetoo had pitched his camp close to that of the Holkar Mahrattas; that he had been received with friendship and distinction; and that

those Mahrattas were fully determined to support the robber, and to oppose the operations of the British. They had just received from the Peishwa an advance of a lac and sixty thousand rupees. Upon this intelligence Sir John Malcolm fell back to the neighbourhood of Oojein, a town of great celebrity in Malwah, where another corps d'armée was collected under the command of Sir Thomas Hislop. While these forces lay at Oojein, another revolution and murder took place in the Holkar camp. The young heir to the musnud was enticed away from the tent in which he was playing, and his mother, who was acting as regent, was seized at night and beheaded, as a traitress sold to the English. Having done these deeds, the Patan chiefs became clamorous for battle; and the whole Holkar army, advancing rapidly, plundered part of the English baggage. The next day, the 21st of December 1817, they met their reward in the bloody battle of Maheidpoor. There, strongly posted on the banks of the Sepra River—into whose waters they had thrown the headless body of the regent—they were beaten, bayoneted, cut to pieces, deprived of all their artillery, amounting to seventy pieces, and of everything that gave them the character of an army. The remnant of their force fled to the large walled town of Rampoora, in the heart of the province of Málwah. Sir John Malcolm formed the plan of the battle, and headed the assault on the left flank of the enemy. Lieutenants-colonel Scott, Macdowall, and Russell, Major James L. Lushington, and other officers, greatly distinguished themselves in the action. The British casualties were unusually severe, amounting to 174 killed and 604 wounded. Among the wounded were 35 officers, of whom 15 were severely injured. In the pursuit, which was continued by Sir John Malcolm and Captain Grant along both banks of the river Sepra, immense booty was obtained, including elephants, some hundreds of camels, &c.

Sir John Malcolm advanced rapidly towards the capital of the Holkars, being joined on the way by the Bombay army from Gujerat, under the orders of Major-general Sir William Keir. Those Mahrattas now agreed to and hastily concluded a treaty of peace, placing their

territories under British protection, and surrendering in perpetuity to the Company various districts, forts, and ghauts. The treaty was scarcely concluded ere some of the Patan chiefs attempted to break it; but these desperadoes were defeated, and most of their adherents slaughtered in Rampoora, by some detachments of infantry and cavalry under General Brown. A few more marches, and two or three stormings of forts, reduced the whole of the country of the Holkar Mahrattas to a state of obedience. These rapid successes kept Scindia steady to the treaty which he had recently concluded, and deprived the wandering Peishwa of almost his last hope. They also enabled our troops to follow the Pindarrees, who were now flying in all directions, like sea-fowl in a storm. Some of Cheetoo's durra had followed the Patan chiefs to Maheidpoor; but after our victory there, Cheetoo fled to shift for himself, seeing that no aid was to be expected from the Mahrattas. He was closely followed by the Gujerat army of Sir William Keir, who surprised him and cut up part of his durra in the neighbourhood of Satoolla. Harassed by the activity of Sir William's pursuit, and finding that other corps were closing fast round them, the marauders endeavoured to retrace their steps to their old haunts in the valley of the Nerbudda, and in parts of Malwah. Other chiefs failed, and were cut up in the attempt; but Cheetoo succeeded in baffling every effort made to intercept him or overtake him, and effected his object by penetrating through a most difficult country. He suddenly reappeared in Malwah, in the neighbourhood of the ancient city of Dhar, situated among rocks, forests, and the sources of rivers; but his extraordinary march had cost him all his baggage and most of his horses. He was now lost sight of for some time; during which the best of his fellow-chiefs, with their durras, were extirpated in other parts. At last his lair was discovered, and on the night of the 25th of January 1818, a strong party of the British came upon him, and utterly broke up his band. The hill-robbers of Malwah, the Bheels and Grasseas, were encouraged to plunder and destroy the fugitives, and are said to have executed the commission very zealously. Cheetoo, however, escaped Bheels and

Grasseas, as he had so often the English, and for a short time wandered and skulked about Malwah with some two hundred followers. When in this state of hopeless misery, he was often advised by some of his followers to surrender to the English, and trust to their mercy. He was possessed, however, by the dreadful idea, that the English would transport him beyond the sea, and this was more hideous to him than death. These followers, who all, one after another, came in and obtained pardon, related, that during their captain's short and miserable sleep at this period, he used continually to murmur: 'Kala Panee! Kala Panee!'—The black sea! oh, the black sea!

At this conjuncture it struck Cheetoo that possibly the Nabob of Bhopal might make terms for him and the remnant of his durra with the English; and rapidly acting on the idea, he suddenly entered the camp of that prince. But when he learned that the Nabob could offer or promise nothing beyond a slender personal maintenance in some remote corner of India, he decamped as suddenly as he had come. While he stayed, his horses were constantly saddled, and his men slept with the bridles in their hands, ready to fly instantly. Preparations were making for the purpose of seizing him the very night he went off from the Bhopal camp. Though he got safely off, he was presently pursued by the Nabob's people, and by parties sent out by Sir John Malcolm. This distressed him so much that Rajun, one of his most faithful and valuable adherents, left him, and made his submission. Yet, after all this, Cheetoo found his way into the Deccan, and made common cause with the Arabs and chiefs of the Peishwa's routed army, receiving occasional protection from the killadar of the fortress of Asseerghur, a place of great strength, the ancient capital of Khandeish, and at this time included among the possessions of Scindia. His durra was completely destroyed, and nearly all his followers deserted him, but nothing could subdue Cheetoo's spirit, or induce him to surrender. His end, however, approached, and it was tragical and singular. Having joined Apa Sahib, he passed the rainy season of 1818 among the Mahadeo mountains; and upon that rajah's expulsion by the English, in February 1819, he accom-

panied him to the fort of Asseerghur. Being refused admittance, he sought shelter in a neighbouring jungle, and, on horseback and alone, attempted to penetrate a cover known to be infested by tigers. He was missed for some days, and no one knew what had become of him. His well-known horse was at last discovered grazing near the margin of the forest, saddled and bridled, and exactly in the state in which it was when Cheetoo had last been seen upon it. A bag of two hundred and fifty rupees was found in the saddle, together with several seal-rings and some letters of Apa Sahib, promising future reward to the great robber. A search was made in the cover for the body; and at no great distance were found clothes clotted with blood, fragments of bones, and, lastly, the Pindarree's head entire, with the features in a state to be recognised. 'The chief's mangled remains,' says the best historian of his adventures, 'were given over to his son for interment; and the miserable fate of one who so shortly before had ridden at the head of 20,000 horse gave an awful lesson of the uncertainty of fortune, and drew pity even from those who had been the victims of his barbarity when living.'

With Cheetoo ended the last of the Pindarrees, and the spirit which had animated their vast lawless associations. Their name is all that now remains of them, for the sad traces of their devastation have entirely disappeared under re-established order, industry, prosperity, police, and good government. It is now nearly a quarter of a century since that gallant officer, accomplished diplomatist, and able writer, the late Sir John Malcolm, said of them: 'There now remains not a spot in India that a Pindarree can call his home. They have been hunted like wild beasts; numbers have been killed; all ruined. Those who espoused their cause have fallen. They were early in the contest shunned like a contagion, and even the timid villagers, whom they so recently oppressed, were among the foremost to attack them. Their principal leaders had either died, submitted, or been made captives; while their followers, with the exception of a few whom the liberality and consideration of the British government have aided to become industrious, are lost in that popula-

tion from whose dross they originally issued. A minute investigation only can discover these once formidable disturbers, concealed as they now are among the lowest classes, where they are making some amends for past atrocities, by the benefit which is derived from their labour in restoring trade and cultivation. These free-booters had none of the prejudices of caste, for they belonged to all tribes. They never had either the pride of soldiers, of family, or of country; so that they were bound by none of those ties which among many of the communities in India assume an almost indestructible character. Other plunderers may arise from distempered times; but as a body, the Pindarrees are so effectually destroyed that their name is already almost forgotten, though not five years are passed since it spread terror and dismay over all India.'

The Mahratta wars, which were waged by the Marquis of Hastings, are chiefly interesting from their having led to these desirable results. In these wars there was very little manœuvring, either on our side or on that of the enemy. The great business of our commanders was to bring the army rapidly up with the foe, and to correctly calculate and provide for the means of so doing. The valour of our troops, native as well as European, their steadiness, rapidity in formation, and their bayonet-points, did the rest. But great was the foresight required and numerous the difficulties to be overcome, ere an Anglo-Indian army, with its amazing train of camp-followers, could be brought up with alert enemies who were for the most part mounted. After leaving their own frontiers, they had often to march hundreds of miles before they could come within reach of a tangible enemy. On these marches the followers could never be left far behind. A very large number of attendants was considered indispensable: one man was required for every three bullocks, and many were required for the elephants and camels of the army; every horse in the army had, besides the rider, two attendants, one to clean and take care of him, the other to cut the grass and provide his forage; the palanquin and litter-bearers for the sick formed another numerous and useful class; field-officers, including the people who carried

had charge of their tents, baggage, &c., had each about forty attendants; captains had twenty, and subalterns ten servants each; the bazaar people, the merchants, their families, servants, &c., formed another numerous body. Generally, while marching, there were no towns to be depended on for supplies, and the army not only carried with it most of the means of subsistence for several months, but many articles of merchandise. The scene altogether resembled the migration of a nation guarded by troops, rather than the advance of an army to subdue an enemy.

On the first year of this war against the Pindarrees and Mahrattas, the army of the Marquis of Hastings was assailed by a new and terrible enemy; this was the Indian cholera morbus, the virulence of which appears to have been increased by the crowded state of our camps. The disease first broke out at Jessore, the capital of a district in the southern quarter of Bengal, a populous and unhealthy city in the centre of the delta of the Ganges, and near the pestiferous Sunderbunds. It began its ravages as the rainy season of 1817 set in, and cut off the majority of those whom it attacked. From Jessore it spread in all directions, shewing, as it was thought, a preference for the valleys of rivers. Ascending the valley of the Ganges, it reached the camp of Brigadier-general Hardyman about the beginning of October; but the troops, being then encamped in a dry healthy country, and being but few in number, suffered comparatively little. Continuing its course westward, it fell with extraordinary violence upon the army commanded by Lord Hastings in person, just after his lordship had concluded the treaty with Scindia. This army, when first seized, was encamped in a low and unhealthy part of Bundelcund, on the banks of the river Sinde, a confluent of the Jumna, which has its source in the mountains of Malwah. The year was one of scarcity, and grain had been collected for the troops, through the camp-followers, with extreme difficulty, and of course of inferior quality. The water of the country, except where it could be obtained from running streams, was indifferent. The time of the year, too, was that at which the heat of the day is most strongly contrasted with the cold of the night. To all these extraordinary circumstances was

superadded the very crowded state of the camp of so large an army. For about ten days that the disease raged with its greatest fury, the whole camp was a hospital. The mortality amounted to about a tenth of the whole number collected there. Europeans and natives, soldiers and camp-followers, were alike affected; but the latter, being generally worse clothed and fed than the fighting-men, suffered in a greater proportion. Of the Europeans, fewer were seized; but those who took the disease more frequently died, and usually within a few hours. The camp was abandoned, and the army continued for some days to move to the eastward, in the hope of finding relief in a better climate; but each day's march many dead and dying were abandoned, and many more fell down on the road—so many that it was not possible to furnish the means for carrying them on, although the utmost possible provision had been made by the previous distribution of bullock-carts and elephants for the accommodation of the sick. Nothing was heard along the line of march but groans, and shrieks, and lamentations; even the healthy were broken in spirit and incapable of exertion; and, for the time, the efficiency of this fine army seemed to be entirely destroyed. Towards the end of November, when the army reached a healthy station at Erech, on the right bank of the Betwah River, the epidemic had visibly expended its violence. The camp was, however, still crowded with convalescents, when it marched with its noble commander to take an active part in the war.

During the rage of the epidemic, one or two of his servants in attendance sunk suddenly from behind his lordship's chair; and the noble marquis himself, seeing the probability of being attacked by the dreadful disease, gave secret instructions, in case of his dying, to be buried in his tent, lest the enemy should hear of his death, and be thereby encouraged to attack his disheartened and crippled troops. The return of health came very opportunely, for the army had been but a very short time at Erech when the marquis received intelligence that Scindia had sent an invitation to the Pindarrees. The Mahratta prince was reported to have promised the robbers that if they would come so near to Gwalior as to make his getting

to them easy, he would break his recent treaty with the English, and join them with the force which he had at his capital. The Pindarrees, in fact, were in full march for Gwalior, without meeting even a show of resistance from troops of Scindia stationed on their route, though the co-operation of his army for the extinction of the Pindarrees was an article of the treaty. The movements of these Pindarrees, and the suspicious conduct of Scindia's troops, imposed on the marquis the necessity of making a retrograde movement. 'We hurried back to the Sinde,' says his lordship; 'but this time we chose a position nearer to Gwalior, than that which we had before occupied. We were within thirty miles of the city, and our advanced-guard was sent to occupy the passes through the hills, which run at some distance south of Gwalior from the Sinde to the Chumbul. These passes were the only routes by which communication could take place between the Pindarrees and Scindia; and I was nearer to support my advanced-guard than the Maharajah (Scindia) was to attack it, could he bring his men to so desperate a stake. The Pindarrees, finding their hopes baffled, and the pass, &c., stopped, attempted to retire; but they had been followed close by our divisions, were surprised, dispersed, and slaughtered in a number of small actions. In short, they disappeared; and thus our objects were completed.'

While the forces under the Marquis of Hastings, and the divisions under Hislop, Malcolm, Marshall, Keir, Adams, and other officers, were chasing the Pindarrees from moor and mountain, valley and jungle, or reducing the forts in Malwah, Brigadier-general Smith, who had been reinforced at Poonah, prepared for an active pursuit of Bajee Rao, the fugitive Peishwa, who had flitted hither and thither like an *ignis-fatuus*. Mr. Mountstuart Elphinstone, having organised a police and a provisional administration for the city of Poonah, accompanied General Smith's division, which began its march at the end of November. Gokla, one of the Peishwa's evil advisers, but bravest officers, attempted to defend a ghaut leading to the high land where the Kistnah has its source, and where the Peishwa had found a refuge and a rallying-point; but the Mahratta was beaten, and the pass was cleared by the British with

great ease. No fighting, but rapid and most wearying marches, ensued; the Peishwa's army flying in a sort of zigzag, and the Peishwa himself always keeping in advance of his main body. At last the Mahratta succeeded in getting round Smith's division; and then, passing between Poonah and Seroor, he moved northward as far as Wuttoor, on the road to Nassuck. Here he was joined by his long-lost favourite, Trimbúkjee, who brought with him a considerable reinforcement of horse and foot. Trimbukjee had collected these forces in various directions, but a good part of them appear to have been Pindarrees. But for the good fights made in front of the Presidency at Nagpoor, and within the walls of that city, Apa Sahib would have accompanied Trimbukjee with his large army and his desperate Arabs. After he had discovered the direction the Peishwa had taken, and had recruited his own worn-out cattle, General Smith, on the 22nd of September, started again in pursuit. This headlong race to the northward brought Smith close upon the rear of the Mahrattas; but, with the lubricity of eels, they slipped through his fingers, and making a flank-movement behind some hills, they turned suddenly to the south, and retraced their steps towards Poonah. Colonel Burr, who commanded in that city, apprehending an attack, solicited the reinforcement of a battalion from Seroor. Captain Francis French Staunton,* of the Bombay establishment, was forthwith detached from Seroor, with about 600 sepoys, 300 auxiliary horse, and two six-pounders. The distance was only two short marches. Staunton began his march from Seroor at eight o'clock in the evening of the 31st of December, and at ten the next morning he reached the heights of Corregaum about half-way to Poonah, when, looking down upon the plain which lay between him and that city, he saw the whole of the Peishwa's army, estimated at 20,000 horse and several thousand foot. His march to Poonah was intercepted, and he himself was in great danger of being cut off. The brave officer did what the circumstances of the case required: he made a dash at the village of Corregaum—which stood on the heights, and which was com-

* Subsequently Col. F. F. Staunton, C.B.

posed of a number of stone houses with strong stone walls round the gardens—hoping to gain possession of it before it could be obtained by the enemy. But the Mahrattas, or rather the Arabs, who composed the main body of their infantry, were as near to the village as was Captain Staunton; and as he entered at one side and took possession of some of the houses, the Arabs entered at the opposite side and took possession of other houses. A terrible struggle ensued, at first between the Company's troops and the Arabs for the possession of the whole of the village, and then between our handful of men and nearly the whole of the Mahratta army. Unfortunately, Captain Swanston, who commanded our 300 auxiliary horse, was wounded early in the day, and his weak squadrons could not shew themselves in face of the masses of Mahratta cavalry. The enemy, who had been running too fast to carry artillery with him, brought up only two guns; but if there was an equality in this particular arm, their infantry exceeded ours by ten to one. Nevertheless our admirable sepoys maintained their post, and kept up an incessant fight from the hour of noon till nine in the evening, during which time they had no refreshment, and not even a drop of water to drink. Attack after attack was made under the eye of the Peishwa, who stood, no doubt at a safe distance, on a neighbouring hill. They had all failed, when Lieutenant Chisholm, the officer of artillery, with most of his men, having been killed at a post near a pagoda, and all the European officers having been disabled except three, the Arabs charged and obtained possession of one of our two guns which was stationed at the pagoda. Our wounded were lying thick round that building, and among them were Assistant-surgeon Wingate, Captain Swanston, and Lieutenant Connellon. The wild Arabs immediately began to massacre these helpless wounded men, and to mutilate the bodies of the slain. Poor Wingate was literally hacked to pieces, as was the body of Lieutenant Chisholm, the officer of artillery. But the Arabs did not long enjoy their bloody triumph; the three undisabled officers, Captain Staunton, Lieutenant Jones, and Assistant-surgeon Wylie, though almost exhausted, and with their men fainting from want of water, headed one

more charge, the last of the many that they made during the day, recaptured the lost gun, and slaughtered the Arabs in a heap. The charge was utterly desperate, for every man felt that there was nothing between him and victory except torture and death. On this occasion Lieutenant Pattinson, who had been wounded and carried into a house, appeared again at the head of his men, and continued to exert the little strength he had left until he received another wound, which proved mortal. Captain Swanston and Lieutenant Connellon were rescued; and every man of the Arabs who had penetrated to the pagoda was bayoneted without mercy. By a little after nine, the enemy were completely driven from the village and all the ground near it, and our fainting sepoys were then enabled to obtain a supply of water, the only refreshment they got during the whole day and following night. Where the desperate Arabs had failed, there was slight chance that the cowardly Mahrattas would renew the attempt. Captain Staunton and his people passed the night without any molestation. At daybreak on the following morning the Mahratta army was seen hovering about the village, but none of them would venture near; and this day also passed without any molestation. Captain Staunton had consumed so much powder during the nine hours' fighting of the preceding day, that he had only a few rounds of ammunition left; and provisions in the camp there were none, and none were to be procured in the village. Despairing, therefore, of being able to reach Poonah, he determined to move back to Seroor. He began his retreat in the dark on the night of the 2nd of January; he sacrificed much of his baggage in order to provide the means of conveying his numerous wounded, but he brought off not only his guns, but likewise all his wounded, and with them reached Seroor by nine o'clock the next morning, the 3rd of January. The men had had no refreshment but water from the 31st of December. Three officers were killed and two wounded; 62 men were killed and 113 wounded, exclusive of the auxiliary horse. The loss of men was most severe in the artillery, 12 being killed and 8 wounded out of a detail for two six-pounders only.

In the course of the 3rd of January, the day on which

Captain Staunton got back to Seroor, Brigadier-general Smith reached the village of Corregaum with his strong division. The Peishwa and his Mahrattas fled back to the table-land near the sources of the Kistnah, from which they had descended. General Smith followed them closely, and Brigadier-general Pritzler, with another division, was moving from another point to intercept them. The Mahrattas continued to turn and twist like eels; and though Pritzler trod upon their tail more than once, and cut off part of it, they could not be so overtaken as to be brought to a general action, or even to a stand. They were very nearly caught in the neighbourhood of Satara, on the 28th of January; but they escaped by a ghaut, with the loss of part of their rear-guard. A small detachment under Colonel Boles cannonaded them out of another ghaut, which they were attempting to thread; but they only changed their line of march. The troops were exhausted by this harassing pursuit, which seemed to produce no visible advantage. Mountstuart Elphinstone had the merit of recommending a better plan of operations. This was to storm the many strong places in the country, to deprive the Peishwa of the means of subsistence, to reduce Satara, which was still the nominal capital of the Mahratta empire, and to reinstate the Satara family in an independent sovereignty. The fortress of Satara surrendered to Brigadier-general Smith on the 10th of February, the day on which he first appeared before it. Some other places were in process of reduction, when the Peishwa made certain rash movements, which enabled General Smith to fall upon him at Ashtah, on the 20th of February, with the 2nd and 7th regiments of Madras light cavalry, and two squadrons of His Majesty's 22nd dragoons. Bajee Rao, the dastardly Peishwa, deserted his palanquin and his army, mounting a horse, and galloping away as soon as the battle began; but Gokla, his general, seeing that he must either fight or lose the baggage, and nearly everything else, made a bold stand, outflanking Smith's small force, and at one moment threatening it in the rear. But the British dragoons charged his *gole*,* and killed him in the charge. The

* A mass of Mahratta cavalry.

death of Gokla left the Mahrattas without a head. From this moment, all was confusion and panic; each mass of cavalry breaking as our dragoons approached it. Some faint resistance was attempted in the camp; but our dragoons dashed in, and made good booty. Twelve elephants and fifty-seven camels formed part of this prize. General Smith was slightly wounded on the head, and Lieutenant Warrand, of the 22nd dragoons, was wounded by Gokla, who fought fiercely in the melée, and wounded several of our men before he fell; but no one was killed on our side, and only seventeen or eighteen of the soldiers were wounded.

The remnant of the Peishwa's army fled towards the north, being daily thinned by desertion. Brigadier-general Pritzler, General Monro, Colonels Prother and Deacon, reduced all the forts that remained; the Mahratta flag was fast disappearing, and so were the hopes of the Mahratta chiefs. Our divisions and detachments in the field, in almost all parts of India, were too numerous and too well posted to allow of any junction being effected between the Peishwa and the forces of any of our other enemies.

After the battle of Ashtah, Brigadier-general Smith repaired to Satara, in order to assist Mr. Elphinstone in setting up the rajah. In this way the Peishwa gained a few days' respite during which he continued to press to the north-west with the design of throwing himself into the territories of the Nizam of the Deccan, which he hoped to find ill furnished with troops. But turning back from Satara and making a short halt at Seroor, Smith renewed his pursuit of the Peishwa on the 10th of March. Brigadier-general Doveton, with his division, moved in another direction, in the expectation of intercepting the Peishwa. Nevertheless, the Mahratta traversed the Nizam's dominions from west to east, and appeared on the banks of the Whurdah on the 1st of April. But as his van was crossing that river, with the intention of marching upon Nagpoor, it was met and driven back by a small detachment under Colonel Scott. The Peishwa then tried to cross the river at another point, but here he was met by Colonel Adams, and was informed by his scouts that General Doveton was

getting close upon him. Without waiting the arrival of Doveton, Adams followed the Mahrattas, came up with them near Seuni, and with only one regiment of native cavalry and some horse-artillery, gave them a signal overthrow. The enemy fled through the jungles, leaving behind them five guns, the Peishwa's much-sunken treasure, three elephants, and 200 camels. This time Bajee Rao had a very narrow escape; for, though he began to run as soon as his people began to fight, a palanquin in which he had just been riding was taken, and was found to be perforated by a shot. More than 1,000 of his Mahrattas remained dead on the field. They were knocked down by our horse-artillery, or by our cavalry, in their flight. They can scarcely have stood anywhere, for Colonel Adams's total loss was only two wounded. General Doveton was near enough to hear the firing of Adams's guns; but it was found necessary to halt our troops, in order to wait for supplies; and then mistakes were committed as to the direction in which the pursuit ought to be continued. Nor was it easy to avoid these errors, for the Peishwa's army split up into various detachments, and each took a route of its own. Two-thirds of his people quitted his standard altogether, and were only anxious to reach their homes as speedily as might be. Bajee Rao's whole object now was to get back to the north-east; but here he found his progress stopped by General Sir Thomas Hislop, who was returning from Malwah to the Deccan. On his way, Sir Thomas had resorted to a measure of unusual severity. The fort of Talnair or Talneir, situated on the north bank, and commanding a ford over the river Tapty, was one of the places ceded to the English by Holkar under the late treaty. Sir Thomas had in his possession Holkar's own orders for the quiet surrender of the place; yet a fire was opened upon his troops from the fort. The Mahratta killadar, or commandant, was warned that if he continued to resist the order of his master, he would be dealt with as a rebel: without heeding the message, the killadar continued to fire. Upon this Sir Thomas Hislop occupied the pettah, or open town, and turned his artillery upon the fort. The gate of the fort was blown open by two six-pounders. The flank com-

panies of the Royal Scots and of the Company's European regiment rushed in, and came to the second gate, which was found open. At the third gate they were met by the killadar, who came out by the wicket and surrendered to Colonel Conway. The third and fourth gates were then opened, and the storming-party advanced to the fifth, which led into the body of the place. This was found shut, but part of the garrison within demanded terms, and expressed their dissatisfaction at the gates being closed. After a very short parley, in which they were summoned to surrender at discretion, the wicket-gate was opened from within, and Lieutenant-colonel Murray, Major Gordon, Captain MacGregor, and Lieutenants Chauvel and MacGregor, entered, and were followed by ten or twelve grenadiers. They were scarcely within the wicket when some wild Arabs, who formed part of the garrison, fell upon them with swords, spears, and knives. Major Gordon and Captain MacGregor were killed forthwith; Lieutenant-colonel Murray was wounded in several places, cut down, and disabled; the two lieutenants were wounded and cut down also, and all the grenadiers were either killed or wounded. But the rest of our storming-party soon rushed through the wicket, drove off the murderous Arabs, and in the end slaughtered every man that was in the fort. Between Arabs, Patans, and Mahrattas, 300 men were sacrificed to the vengeance of our infuriated soldiery. On the next morning, Sir Thomas Hislop had the killadar hanged on one of the bastions, on the twofold charge of rebellion and treachery. It was doubted whether the killadar had ordered, or was privy to, the onslaught of the Arabs; it was doubted, but we think unreasonably, whether the Arabs understood that the killadar had surrendered, and that the Mahrattas had agreed to submit; and the conduct of Sir Thomas Hislop, in ordering the execution of the killadar, was severely censured in several quarters. But the example was useful, and upon knowing that the commandant of Talnair had been executed, the killadars of the much stronger forts of Gaulna, Chandore, and other places which Holkar had ceded, submitted upon summons, or as soon as they were shewn Holkar's orders to admit the English.

Bajee Rao had been running hither and thither for more than six months, but his race was now well-nigh finished. North, south, east and west, his road was cut off, and forces were moving round him from the intermediate points of the compass. Finding himself so sorely pressed, he attempted again to pass into Malwah ; but Sir John Malcolm, who was himself at Mhow, a town or large cantonment in the Malwah province, had so stationed some forces under Lieutenants-colonel Russel and Corsellis as to render this movement impracticable. On the evening of the 25th of May, Sir John Malcolm learned that a *vakeel* from the Peishwa had arrived at a place on the Nerbudda River, about forty miles from Mhow. Malcolm immediately moved towards that place, and took his troops with him. On the 27th of May, he met the vakeel or ambassador, who assured him that the Peishwa was determined to come to him, and to trust to his friendship and generosity. Sir John, being informed of the plan of disposing of the Peishwa which had been framed by the Marquis of Hastings and Mr. Elphinstone, stated the conditions, and sent the vakeel back to his master, who was occupying a good position on a hill. The Peishwa remained irresolute for several days, during which the division of General Doveton and other troops got close into his neighbourhood. At last, on the evening of the 1st of June, he came down to a village in the plain, and met Sir John Malcolm. The Mahratta did not come alone; he had an escort 2,500 strong, and he brought his family with him. Malcolm, who had come to the appointed place with only a thin attendance, repeated the conditions, and demanded the immediate surrender of Trimbukjee. Bajee Rao declared that it was not in his power to give up Trimbukjee; that Trimbukjee had an army and camp of his own; that he was stronger than he was. 'Then,' said Malcolm, 'I will attack him forthwith.' 'Success attend you!' replied the Peishwa. The Mahratta prince further declared that he had been involved in a war without meaning it; that he was treated as an enemy by the English, who had supported his family for two generations; that he was now in a lamentable situation, but believed that he still had a real friend in Sir John Malcolm.

He was told that he ought either to throw himself at once on the magnanimity of the British government, or prepare for further resistance. 'How can I resist now?' said the Mahratta; 'I am surrounded.' Malcolm replied that this was quite true, but that still he might escape if he preferred becoming a freebooter and wanderer to accepting the liberal provisions which the English were ready to give him. Bajee Rao protested that Malcolm was his friend, his only friend, and that he would never leave him, but trust entirely to his good offices. Nevertheless, the Peishwa, on breaking up the conference, asked for a little delay, and in retiring to the ghaut from which he had descended, he took care to guard his rear and flanks with his resolute Arab infantry, and to shew the muzzles of his guns over the rocks; and upon reaching his camp he sent trusty messengers to the camp of Trimbukjee, to tell that favourite to beware of Malcolm. It was, however, utterly impossible for him to procrastinate very long, for he was completely hemmed in, and his supplies of provisions were failing. He informed Sir John Malcolm that he would go to his camp, and conclude the treaty as proposed to him, on the morning of the 3rd of June. When that morning came, he tried one faint shuffle more. It was an inauspicious day, he had some religious ceremonies to perform; would not his dear friend Malcolm wait till to-morrow? Malcolm gave him to understand that he would not wait another hour; and this, with the not very distant firing of some English guns on one of his flanks or in his rear, had the effect of removing all further hesitation. At about eleven o'clock on the morning of the 3rd, he came down to Sir John Malcolm's camp and delivered himself up, with his family. Malcolm, like nearly all his distinguished Indian contemporaries, was a man of a large and generous heart: none knew better than he the demerits and the helplessness of the fallen enemy now before him, yet he agreed that the Peishwa's allowance should not be less than eight lacs of rupees per annum, and that a most liberal provision should be made for his courtiers, Brahmans, temples, &c. The supreme government at Calcutta thought that Sir John had granted too much; but as it was done, they confirmed the grants. Bajee Rao

renounced for ever the dignity of Peishwa, or supreme chief of the Mahrattas, together with all his claims of sovereignty. If Trimbukjee had not been secured in an English prison, the case might have been different; but as that turbulent felon was caught, after another hard run for it, the ex-Peishwa quietly resigned himself to a life of luxury and ease, spending his £80,000 a year, not in raising troops or exciting combinations against the Company, but in mere sensual indulgences. He was very anxious to have his residence fixed at Poonah; but to this the governor-general objected strongly, and for very evident reasons. To Benares, which was proposed to him as a suitable residence, he expressed a rooted aversion. He would have preferred Muttra, but as that was a frontier station it was refused. The village of Bithoor or Brimatwar, on the Ganges, near Cawnpore, was finally fixed upon for his residence. His progress through Rajpootana and the Doab to the place of his exile excited hardly any sensation among the people. When settled at Bithoor, he bathed daily in the holy-water of the Ganges, indulged in the highest living of a Brahman, maintained three expensive sets of dancing-girls, and surrounded himself with low buffoons and sycophants. The rallying-point of the Mahratta confederacy was thus broken up, and if it was not quite so easy to change the character of the Mahratta people, and to introduce peaceful industrious habits among them—if the unchanged character of that people prognosticated future troubles in India—still their power of doing mischief was from this time vastly reduced. To the restored family of the Rajah of Satara, whose hereditary claim to the sovereignty of the country, and to the dignity of Peishwa, was held to be much better than that of Bajee Rao, only a very limited territory was allotted, upon his yielding all claim or pretension to be Peishwa; a dignity wisely and for ever abrogated. The Satara dominions occupy a surface of about 11,000 square miles; being bounded on the west by the Western Ghaut Mountains; on the south, by the Warna and Kistnah; on the north, by the Neera and Beemah Rivers; and on the east, by the frontier of the Nizam's dominions. The total net revenues amounted to 15,600,000 rupees; but out of this sum three

lacs per annum were reserved for chiefs who had become subjects of the Company, and three lacs more were alienated. The management of the territories, and the superintendence of the Rajah of Satara's affairs, were assigned to Captain Grant until the country should become tranquillised. Many of the hill forts, which had been what the worst of our baronial castles were in the early part of the twelfth century—dens of thieves, cut-throats, and violators—were dismantled; and others, cleared of their occupants, were allowed to go to ruin. In 1821, when the young rajah attained the age of twenty-one, he was invested with the administration of his dominions, which were then tranquil and prosperous.

Upon the conclusion of the treaty with Sir John Malcolm all that remained of the ex-Peishwa's army quietly broke up and dispersed. Not even Trimbukjee could keep a force together. This chief, knowing that the English would condemn him to imprisonment for life, fled with a few followers to the neighbourhood of Nassuck, a large town and place of pilgrimage on the Godavery, principally inhabited by Brahmans. The murderer had ever shewn a preference for these holy places and he probably hoped to escape notice among the crowds of Hindoo pilgrims that were constantly repairing to the temples of Nassuck. Here, in fact, he remained concealed for some time, in spite of the active search making for him. At last, Captain Swanston, one of the heroes of Corregaum, being detached by Mr. Elphinstone from a distant station, succeeded, after a march of fifty miles in sixteen hours, in discovering the murderer's hiding-place, and in surrounding the house. When the gates were forced, Trimbukjee was reclining on a cot; he fled to the upper part of the house, and concealed himself under some straw. He was presently dragged from his cover; he offered no resistance, and was sent under a good guard to Tannah, the prison from which he had escaped through the ingenious aid of the Mahratta groom and songster. After a short time he was carried to Calcutta, and put into the cage in Fort William, which had previously been occupied by Vizier Ali; but he was very soon conveyed to the rock of Chunar, near Benares.

The capture of the fortress of Asseerghur was the last operation of the Pindarree and Mahratta war; a war which had witnessed an unprecedented number of sieges, an unprecedented number and complexity of movements and some of the most remarkable forced marches that were ever made in any country. 'Thirty hill-fortresses, each of which might have defied the whole Anglo-Indian army, fell in the course of a few weeks; and this vast Mahratta empire, which had overshadowed the East, and before which the star of the Mogul had become pale, was annihilated.'

After the siege of Asseerghur the armies of the three presidencies returned to their several stations and cantonments in Bengal, Madras, and Bombay; and the regions which had been crossed and recrossed, and traversed in all directions by immense hosts of combatants, by British and native troops, Peishwa Mahrattas, Holkar Mahrattas, Nagpoor Mahrattas, Pindarrees, Patans, Arabs, Gonds, and others, became quiet as a bay of the ocean after a storm; quieter and happier than they had been for many ages. In the territories assumed by the Company, or taken under its immediate protection, able men were left by the Marquis of Hastings to improve this tranquillity, to establish permanently the reign of peace and law, and to better the condition of all the native inhabitants. For more than thirty preceding years, the province of Malwah and the whole of Central India had been oppressed, pillaged, and laid waste by the Pindarrees, by the Mahrattas of all tribes, by the Rajpoot princes, and by the Puars; these different powers acted sometimes in combination, but more frequently in opposition to one another; they were all equally cruel and rapacious in the moment of success and conquest, and about equally incapable of giving that stablity to their conquests which would have given relief to the poor oppressed people, whose greatest calamity was the frequent change of masters. To Sir John Malcolm, who had assisted so potentially in subduing the sanguinary anarchists, and expelling the Pindarrees, was assigned the equally difficult duty of restoring order and repairing the frightful mischiefs which had been committed in so long a series of years. He was appointed

by the Marquis of Hastings to the military and political command of Malwah, which had perhaps suffered more than any other part of India. Hundreds upon hundreds of its villages were deserted and roofless; the ferocious tigers of the jungles literally usurped the country, and fought with the returning inhabitants for their fields. In the state of Holkar alone, of 3,701 villages only 2,038 were inhabited; 1,663 were 'without lamp'—were wholly deserted. Under the wise rule established by Malcolm, more than two-thirds of these deserted villages were restored and repeopled before the end of 1820; and in less than five years from the time our army first occupied the country, Sir John could boast with an honourable pride, and with perfect correctness, that Malwah and the rest of Central India were tranquil and contented, and rapidly advancing in population and prosperity. 'It may be asserted that history affords few examples where a change in the political condition of a country has been attended with such an aggregate of increased happiness to its inhabitants, as that which was effected within four years in Central India; and it is pleasing to think that, with the exception of suppressing a few Bheel robbers, peace was restored, and has hitherto been maintained, without one musket being fired.' Accustomed to the extremities of military violence, the inhabitants of the country, on the English first entering, betrayed feelings of doubt and alarm. These were, by some, mistaken for dislike to our supremacy; but they arose only out of fear of insult or outrage, and they were speedily removed by the strict discipline preserved by our troops, whether stationary or marching. In a very short time, wherever troops or individuals moved, they were received with cordiality, as the friends and protectors of the people. To organise the country, honourable and intelligent British officers were sent into every part of it. 'The result has been fortunate beyond anticipation. These agents, within their respective circles, have not only, by their direct intercourse with all classes, established great influence, but spread a knowledge of our character and intentions, which has increased respect and confidence; and they have in almost all cases succeeded, by the arbitration of

differences, and the settlement of local disputes, *in preserving the peace of the country without troops.* The most exact observance of certain principles is required from these officers, and their line is very carefully and distinctly prescribed. The object has been to escape every interference with the internal administration of the country, beyond what the preservation of the public peace demanded.' In other parts of India the change was equally beneficial—the blessings derived from the conquest of the Mahrattas and the extirpation of the Pindarrees were equally apparent. As Bishop Heber was travelling through the country in 1824, he overheard a conversation among some villagers, who were comparing the present peaceable times with those in which 'Ameer Khan and Bappoo Scindia came up with their horsemen, and spoiled all the land, and smote all the people, and burned the cities through Mewar and Marwar, till thou comest unto the salt wilderness.' He also heard them say that corn had been gradually getting cheaper, and notwithstanding a late unfavourable season, was still not so dear as it used to be in the years of trouble. The kind and warm-hearted prelate adds: 'When such have been the effects of British supremacy, who will refuse to pray for the continuance of our empire?'

The reputation of the British in India has never stood higher than at the conclusion of the Pindarree and Mahratta war; and during the four remaining years of Lord Hastings's government, the face of Central India was changed to an extent which would have appeared almost incredible to any one who had not contemplated upon the spot the rapid progress of the change, and studied the causes by which it was produced. No war had begun in a higher motive, or had ended in a more positive good to mankind. 'The campaign which had just terminated,' says Malcolm, 'was not an attack upon a state, or upon a body of men, but upon a system. It was order contending against anarchy; and the first triumph was so complete, that there ceased, almost from the moment, to be any who cherished hopes of the contest being either prolonged or revived: the victory gained was slight, comparatively speaking, over armies, to what it was over mind. The universal distress, which a series

of revolutions must ever generate, had gone its circle, and reached all ranks and classes. The most barbarous of those who subsisted on plunder had found that a condition of continued uncertainty and alarm could not be one of enjoyment. The princes, chiefs, and inhabitants of the country had neither national feelings, confidence in each other, nor any one principle of union. When, therefore, the English government, too strong to be resisted, proclaimed every district to be the right of its proprietor, on condition of his proving himself the friend of peace and good order; and when men found that the choice between such a course, and that of continuing the promoters of anarchy, was an option between its friendship or hostility, all concurred in submission. There appeared in a few a difficulty to conquer habits, but in none a spirit of opposition. The desolated state of the country was favourable to the change, for it presented an ample field for the revival of industry in peaceful occupations; but the paramount influence which the results of the war gave to the British government over several of the native states, was the principal cause of that peace and prosperity which ensued. Our officers were enabled to give shape and direction to the efforts of these states, which became an example to others; and a tone of improvement was given to every province of Central India.'

The inhabitants of the wild provinces subject to Scindia started into prosperity as soon as his numerous, restless, and marauding army was broken up. And Scindia himself was as great a gainer as his subjects; for this army, and the insolent rapacious chieftains who raised and commanded it, in reality oppressed him as well as the people, and rarely left him at liberty to use his own judgment, or act according to his own will. The most dangerous of these chieftains were now destroyed; and, aided by the presence of English armies, by the universal discouragement which had fallen upon the Mahrattas, and by the confirmed conviction that their old trade of war had become an unprofitable trade, Scindia was enabled to disband immense corps commanded by insubordinate chiefs, and to reduce his army to 13,000 regular infantry, and 9000 horse. The saving in actual expenditure, from re-

ductions alone, was estimated at twenty lacs of rupees per annum. At the same time the revenues were raised forty per cent. by the restoration of tranquillity and order. Even the disbanded soldiers returned to their native districts, and to their former occupation, as cultivators of the soil. The lamp had been altogether extinguished in only a few villages in Scindia's dominions, but many of these villages had been reduced to four or five families. The voids were rapidly filled up. In 1817 there was not one district belonging to Scindia that was not more or less in a disturbed state; in 1821 there existed not one enemy to the public peace in any of these districts. All the districts which had been wrested from this chief by the Pindarrees were restored to him: the loss of the fortress of Asseerghur was nearly all he lost by the war. In the dominions of Holkar, where the anarchy and devastation had been greater, the change to good was the more striking. Our victory at Maheidpoor had scattered for ever the overgrown army of this state; those battalions were never re-embodied, and 200 men to guard the palace were all the infantry left in the service of this Mahratta dynasty. Three thousand obedient cavalry were retained for the police of the country, together with a small park of artillery. In less than four years the revenues of the state were nearly quadrupled; and the expenses of collection were brought down from forty to fifteen per cent. The rapid restoration of the roofless and deserted villages has been mentioned. The increase of population in the towns was surprising. Within the short space of three years, Indore, a city in the province of Malwah, the capital of the Holkar family, was changed from a desolate town to a flourishing capital, containing eighty or a hundred thousand inhabitants; for not only did those families return which had fled in the troublous times, but the inhabitants of other towns and districts migrated in large numbers, and settled in Indore. The young prince, who was secured on the musnud by British power, abandoned the custom of his predecessors of always residing in camp, and fixed his residence in this thriving capital. Other states and territories participated in these advantages. The Grassecas, the Sondwarrees, the Gonds, as well as the

Bheels and other hereditary and professional robbers, were rapidly suppressed. When the British armies first entered Central India, and even in 1818, the country along the banks of the Nerbudda, and in the Vindhya Mountains, which stretch from the province of Behar to Cape Comorin, was not safe for even troops to pass; and till the end of the same year, when a British cantonment was established at Mhow, the robbers continued their depredations. All these bands were repressed, and the most vicious and depraved among them were gradually made sensible of the blessings attending a better course of life. From the territories of Bhopal to those of Gujerat, along the right bank of the Nerbudda, and from Hindia to the country of Burwannee, on the left bank of that river, a spirit of industry and improvement was introduced. New villages rose everywhere, and forests which had long been deemed impenetrable were fast cleared, on account of the profit derived from the timber required to rebuild villages, towns, cities. Between Jaum and Mandoo, the Bheels began to cultivate every spot, and their hamlets rose with a rapidity that promised an early and complete change in the whole face of that district, and in the manners of its inhabitants. Bishop Heber thought that he discovered a hankering among the 'hill-people' after their old modes of life, and that there were many of the Bheels who still sighed after their late anarchy, and exclaimed, amid the comforts of a peaceable government:

> Give us our wildness and our woods,
> Our huts and caves again.

An English party travelling from Mhow observed some Bheels looking earnestly at a large drove of bullocks which were drinking at a ford. Upon being asked whether those oxen belonged to him, one of the Bheels replied: 'No; but a good part of them would have been ours by this time, if it were not for you English, who will let nobody thrive but yourselves!' But, in proportion as an efficient police was established, and roads, those grand means of civilisation, were opened through the country, the wild mountain Bheels were kept in check, and gradually brought within the pale of law and civilised life.

But for the advance of British armies into Central India, these very Bheels would soon have attracted notice as a substantive power, for they had already acquired an ascendency over several petty native states; and neither Mahrattas nor Patans, neither Arabs nor any other kind of force at the disposal of the native potentates of Central India, would have ventured to attack them in their mountains, where no booty was to be expected, where nothing was to be got but hard blows.

Sir John Malcolm completely succeeded in clearing the country of Arabs and Meckranees, a desperate set of adventurers from Meckran, in Persia, who, in many instances, had made themselves perfectly independent of the native Indian chiefs whom they pretended to serve; and all the petty chieftains were warned that to retain any of these desperadoes as mercenaries, or to attempt to bring any of them back to the country, would be considered as equivalent to a declaration of hostility against the British government. All other classes of mercenaries, or of ruffians, who looked only to sword and spear for their support, were dismissed. Never was the reign of terror and anarchy more complete than in 1817. No contrast can be greater than what was presented in 1821. The natives were happier then than afterwards; for the recollection of the dangers and miseries they had recently endured, increased the enjoyment of present security and good government. 'Take it all in all,' continues Malcolm, speaking of the period of 1821, 'there never was a country where the industrious classes of the population were better pleased with their condition than they now are; nor is this feeling much checked by the moody turbulence of the military classes, who have been deprived of their occupation. Almost all those who were actually natives of the country have been, in one way or other, considered; while a great proportion of the foreign mercenaries, who constituted the chief part of the disbanded armies, have been compelled to leave it; nor will these mercenaries ever return to disturb its peace, while the measures and principles by which the salutary change has been effected are preserved and supported.'

At Poonah, and generally in the dominions of the ex-

Peishwa, Bajee Rao, changes and reforms equally salutary were introduced, principally through the management of the Honourable Mountstuart Elphinstone, who had the genius of a true legislator, and all the generous sympathies of a philanthropist. By the conquest of the Poonah territory, the British dominion and possessions were extended along the western coast, from the northern boundary of the small province of Goa to the mouths of the Tapty; and inland to the long-established western frontier of the Nizam, from the junction of the Whurdah and Toombudra to the junction of the Wagoor and Tapty. Such places in Khandeish, belonging to the Holkar Mahrattas, as fell within these bounds, were ceded to the British by the treaty of Mundesoor, which Sir John Malcolm had concluded after the splendid victory at Maheidpoor. Some other territories south of the Sautpoora range of hills were also yielded. By exchanges with the Guicowar rajah, and by arrangements with some minor princes, a continuous, uninterrupted dominion was obtained from Bombay to Calcutta, and from Madras to Bombay. The former Mahratta war having been attended with the similar advantage of continuous dominion between Madras and Calcutta, the communication between the three presidencies might now be considered as complete.

CHAPTER XIII.

Meeting of Parliament—Prince-Regent's Speech—Address—State of the Country—Proceedings of Parliament—Report of Secret Committees—Bill of Indemnity—Scotch Burgh Reform—Bank Restriction Act—Royal Marriages—Slave Trade—Alien Act—Dissolution.

The death of the Princess Charlotte took place on the 6th of November, 1817; parliament was opened by commission on the 27th of January following. It was the sixth and probably the last session of the fifth parliament of the United Kingdom. The prospect of being speedily sent back to their constituents was not so generally alarming to members in those days as it has since become; still, in

ordinary circumstances, a good many votes were apt to be affected by it, and the last session of the steadiest parliament, when it was certain or likely that a dissolution was at hand, was wont to be distinguished by some little refractoriness, showing itself both in a slight decline of the ministerial majorities and in the increasing number of popular motions, which were for the most part more favourably received than usual, as well as more pertinaciously urged.

The prince-regent's speech, which was read by the lord chancellor, after noticing in the customary terms the continuance of His Majesty's indisposition, proceeded to advert, at somewhat greater length, but in a phraseology hardly less dry and formal, to the death of the princess. His royal highness, it was declared, had been soothed and consoled by the assurances he had received from all classes, both of their just sense of the loss they had sustained, and of their sympathy with his parental sorrow; and, amidst his own sufferings, he had not been unmindful of the effect which the sad event might have on the interests and prospects of the kingdom. Little cordiality, it was well known, had for a long time subsisted between the father and daughter; the natural inclination which the latter had evinced to take part with her mother had estranged and alienated them; and, if the princess had lived much longer, there would probably have been seen the worst example that had yet been exhibited of the dissension and mutual hatred that had uniformly divided the wearer of the crown and the heir-apparent since the accession of the present family; and the internecine war between husband and wife that soon after broke out, would have been rendered still more deplorable and revolting, by their child being in all probability involved in it as an active combatant. The premature death of the Princess Charlotte at least saved herself and all parties that unhappiness. It could not fail, nevertheless, to be keenly felt by her father. Even if he had been a hard-hearted man, which he was not, but only a luxurious and selfish one, he must have been stunned by such a blow. His pride and sense of personal importance, if nothing else, must have been severely wounded by it. His hope

of being the father of a line of kings was gone; he was become the last of his race; his blood would flow in the veins of no future occupant of his throne; no successor in a distant age would look back upon him as a progenitor; his history would end with his own life. All this, however, more calmly viewed, would be found to resolve itself into his merely finding himself in a new position, different from, but not in reality perhaps worse than, the one he had lost. Accordingly, it does not appear that his grief long retained the bitterness and prostration with which it was at first accompanied. He was so ill for a short time that his life was considered to be in danger, and was only saved by copious bleeding; but in little more than three months he had so far recovered both his health and spirits, as to be able, at a dinner given by the Prussian ambassador, to entertain the company with a song.

The sequel of the speech was all congratulatory. It referred to the improvement which had taken place, in the course of the preceding year, in almost every branch of domestic history—to the improved state of public credit—to the progressive improvement of the revenue in its most important branches; mentioned the treaties that had been concluded with Spain and Portugal, with a view to the abolition of the slave-trade; and concluded by recommending to the attention of parliament the deficiency which had so long existed in the number of places of public worship belonging to the Established Church, when compared with the increased and increasing population of the country. The important change which had taken place in the economical condition of the country, it was observed, 'could not fail to withdraw from the disaffected the principal means of which they had availed themselves for the purpose of fomenting a spirit of discontent, which unhappily led to acts of insurrection and treason;' 'and his royal highness,' it was added, 'entertains the most confident expectation, that the state of peace and tranquillity, to which the country is now restored, will be maintained, against all attempts to disturb it, by the persevering vigilance of the magistracy, and by the loyalty and good sense of the people.' Thus did the government flatter itself that its troubles were over, and

that the year 1817, in taking its departure, had carried its evil spirit along with it.

Perhaps, however, this apparent confidence may have been partly assumed by ministers, with a view to the defence of their own proceedings in coping with the late attempts of the disaffected. The best case they could make out for themselves would be to show that the measures they had adopted had been successful in putting down or keeping down disturbance, and that all the dangers against which the extraordinary powers intrusted to them had been intended to provide were now at an end. On the subject of these extraordinary powers, their cessation or their continuance, the speech said not a word. But as soon as it was read, and before the address in answer had been moved, the opposition in both Houses demanded the instant repeal of the act of last session suspending the Habeas Corpus Act. On this, ministers announced that it was their intention to present a bill for that purpose on the following day, and to propose the suspension of the standing orders, as had been done in the case of the act to be repealed, that it might pass without delay. The bill was accordingly passed through the Lords on the 28th, and through the Commons on the 29th.

No amendment was moved to the address; but it gave rise to some debate in both Houses. Lord Lansdowne denied that the recent trials had furnished evidence of the existence of any such conspiracy, or general disposition to insurrection throughout the kingdom, as had been assumed by ministers. 'In the trials at Derby, where it was the business and the particular object of the attorney-general to prove that the discontented there had a correspondence with others in different quarters, he had completely failed. He could not prove that in any part of the country there had been the slightest connection with these conspirators. This terrible conspiracy, too, was suppressed without the slightest difficulty by eighteen dragoons.' His lordship admitted that the Derby conspirators had been very properly brought to trial, and justly convicted; but this, he said, was the only thing ministers had to bring forward as an apology for their measures. Still, he contended, 'it was not the suspension

of the Habeas Corpus that put down the insurrection, or the conspiracy, whichever it might be called; it had been extinguished by the due administration of the law—by apprehending and bringing the persons accused to trial; and the same law could have been applied with equal efficiency, though the Habeas Corpus Act had remained in force.' He maintained further, that there was no proof that the conspiracy had been at all of a political character, or hostile to the institutions of the country. 'The whole disturbance sprung from partial discontent, with which the great body of the population of the place where it broke out were untainted. Even in the very villages through which the insurgents passed, the people ran away from them; and in no part of the country was there any trace to be found of the existence of a conspiracy to alter the king's government.' In the Commons, Sir Samuel Romilly, as has been noticed in a previous page, went still further. There could be no doubt, he observed, that the persons who were convicted at Derby, whether guilty of treason or not, were guilty of a capital crime; 'Brandreth had committed a murder, and those who aided and abetted it were in law equally guilty.' But, he went on, 'in his conscience he believed, from the information he had received, that the whole of that insurrection was the work of the persons sent by the government—not indeed for the specific purpose of fomenting disaffection—but as emissaries of sedition from clubs that had never existed.' If these words be correctly reported, Sir Samuel, while acquitting ministers of designedly getting up or attempting to get up an insurrection, would appear to have charged them with being cognizant of the false pretences with which Oliver, and the other spies employed by them, are supposed to have deluded and ensnared their victims—to have concerted with those dangerous agents the fable of the metropolitan clubs of which they gave themselves out as the emissaries. This, however, as we have already observed, is certainly not for a moment to be believed, nor probably is it now a notion entertained by anybody. The ministers were likely enough both to have taken an exaggerated view of the extent and object of whatever tendency to disturbance existed, and to be willing to

make the case appear to be, or to have been, as bad as possible; but there are no facts or probabilities which entitle us to suppose that they resorted, or were capable of resorting, to positive trickery and falsehood, even in order to get at the secret counsels of parties whom they might believe to harbour guilty designs. Their indiscretion and culpability consisted in the recklessness with which they let loose such miscreants as Oliver among the people without taking sufficient, or apparently any precaution to protect either themselves or others from being deceived and misled by their arts and machinations.

Mr. Ward, writing to his friend Dr. Copleston, from Vienna, on the 14th of February, after mentioning that he had just seen in the German papers some meagre extracts from the proceedings at the opening of parliament, comments as follows on the political condition and prospects of the country: 'As fair a promise of an uninteresting session as a man desirous of staying abroad can wish. The exaggerated lamentation for the poor princess could not but be, from its obvious purport, offensive to the other branches of the royal family; and in the speech which the minister has composed for the prince-regent, I think I distinguish somewhat of that feeling which it was calculated to excite. The mention of her is rather dry—sulky, rather than sad. The country seems reviving. I have excellent accounts from Staffordshire. At one moment the iron trade was as brisk as ever, but since it has a little gone off; no distress, however.' Afterwards, having noticed the recent decease of George Rose, and the appointment of Mr. F. Robinson (afterwards Earl of Ripon)—'a most amiable, gentlemanlike man'—as his successor in the office of treasurer of the navy, he adds: 'But this is one of those rare periods of tranquillity and prosperity, when the efficient members of the government may indulge themselves in appointing whom they please to what they please. Time was when the odds were ten to one against them: luckily for the country, as well as for themselves, they have won the game, and they are now enjoying themselves in spending the stakes.' And this was probably the general opinion. Mr. Wyndham Quin, the seconder of the address in the Commons, gave

in his speech a picture of the national prosperity, which was almost without a shade. 'The country,' he said, 'feels an increased circulation in every artery, in every channel of its commerce. Last year the fires were extinguished in most of the ironworks; now they are in full activity, and the price of iron has risen from eight or nine to about fourteen pounds a ton. The demand for linen, the staple of the north of Ireland, is unprecedented both as to quantity and price. The funds are now 80, last year about 63. Money is most abundant, and, when lent at mortgage on good security, lowering in rate of interest, and to be had at 4½ per cent.; at the same time that sales of land are effected at better prices than last year.' Gold, too, the orator declared, had reappeared; though, he added, the little request in which it was held seemed to evince that a belief in the stability of our financial system was universal. Wages had advanced; employment was plentiful; imports and exports had increased; the revenue had improved; and confidence, finally, had returned among all classes and descriptions of men.

The painter may have been rather profuse of his sunshine; but, with due allowance for the occasion, this was not perhaps a very extravagant representation of the outside aspect of things. Now let us look a little deeper, and endeavour to ascertain what was the real state of the case.

First, in regard to the economical condition of the country. A great fall had taken place in the price of grain. The *Gazette* average for wheat at the end of June, 1817, had been 111*s.* 6*d.*; by the end of September the price in Mark Lane had declined to 74*s.* 4*d.* Importation ceased in November. But prices very soon began to rise again. 'As the weather,' Mr. Tooke writes, 'during the greater part of the harvesting; though favourable in the main, was calm and foggy, with only short intervals in the day of brilliant sunshine, and as the rains again set in before the harvest was fully completed, the samples of new wheat, when brought to market, were found to be damp and cold, and unfit for immediate use. There being at the same time very little old corn of good quality remaining, the few samples of the new which were fit for

use were in great demand, and fetched high prices.' By the close of the year 1817, the average for wheat had risen again to 85*s.* 4*d.*; the ports opened in February, 1818; but, notwithstanding large importations, prices still continued to rise. After a rather wet spring, a drought, which commenced about the middle of May, continued almost without interruption till the middle of September, being the most severe that had been experienced in England since 1794. 'Apprehensions,' Mr. Tooke continues, 'were in consequence entertained of stunted crops of every description of vegetation. Hay got up to £9 and £10 the load. Beans, peas, turnips, and potatoes were supposed to have totally failed. It was on the ground of anticipations of scarcity, in consequence of this character of the season, that British corn was bought freely on speculation, and that many farmers were induced to hold back their stocks: many persons, likewise, importers as well as dealers and farmers, reasoned erroneously on the operation of the corn-laws, and supposed that, when once the ports were shut, having the monopoly of the home market, they would be secure of obtaining, at worst, within a trifle of the opening price of 80*s.*' The entire importation of wheat in this year amounted to a million and a half of quarters. But an unhealthy speculation went on in many other articles as well as in grain. The imports of silk, of wool, of cotton, and various other descriptions of foreign produce, were doubled, and in some cases tripled, since 1816. The entire quantity of foreign and colonial produce imported in 1818 was double what it had been in 1816, and very nearly half as much again as it had been in 1817. The so-called prosperity, therefore, which was beginning to dazzle men's eyes when parliament met, had much more in it of show than of substance. It was for the greater part mere speculative excitement. 'A state of prosperity,' as Mr. Tooke observes, 'it doubtless was, as long as it lasted, to those who were gaining, or appeared to be gaining, by the rising markets; but to the bulk of the population those rising markets were the occasion of privation and suffering.' It was not long before symptoms of this suffering began to show themselves.

For a time, however, there was certainly an improvement in the political temper of the popular mind. What we may call its combustibility was considerably reduced. Bamford tells us, indeed, that with the restoration of the Habeas Corpus Act the agitation for reform was renewed, and that numerous meetings for the promotion of that object were held in various parts of the country; but we find no mention anywhere either of secret combination among the radical reformers of the earlier part of the year 1818, or of proceedings contemplating a resort to violence —no trace of conspiracy any more than of disturbance, of any attempt either to defy or to elude the law. Having recovered the legal rights and liberties of which they had been for a season deprived, the first feeling, even of the generality of those who carried furthest a desire to amend the constitution, seems to have been to take their stand, nevertheless, upon the constitution — somewhat after Bacon's notion of the true import of the scriptural injunction to stand fast in the old ways, which he interprets as meaning 'that men should make a stand thereupon, and discover what is the best way; but, when the discovery is well taken, then to make progression.' Whatever may have been the darker designs of a few individuals, this was unquestionably the present disposition both of the working-classes as a body and of the great majority of their leaders. The fuel that would have been required for a more thorough-going zeal, or a more desperate course of action, was for the present burnt out. The nearly universal inclination was at least to try what could be done with the law, and by means of the law, before attempting to act without it and against it. So much, at any rate, was gained by the restoration of the constitution. Then, however delusive or hollow might be much of the apparent economical prosperity of the country, the people were yet for the moment certainly better off than they had been. If the price of food was still high, and was even ascending, it was notwithstanding much lower than it had been in the early part of the preceding year. Employment, too, so long as the tide of speculation was rising, was really more plentiful, and wages had advanced. A spirit of activity, enterprise, and hope, had succeeded to

general stagnation and despondency in the commercial and manufacturing world; and, with both their hands and their minds busied about matters of nearer and more natural concernment, the working-classes found their interest in projects of political innovation considerably moderated, and also probably their views somewhat sobered down.

Meanwhile, the parliament, at once the workshop of legislation and the arena of party contest, went on filling the air with the din of its labours and its battles. The great subject of discussion for the first two months of the session was the conduct of ministers in the application of their late extraordinary powers. Here ministers themselves may be said to have taken the initiative. A green bag containing papers relative to the recent state of the country was, by command of the prince-regent, presented in the Lords on the 2nd of February, and in the Commons on the day following; and secret committees to consider and report upon the papers were appointed in both Houses. In the Commons, the motion for the appointment of the committee, which was made by Lord Castlereagh on the 5th, gave rise to some debate; but there was no division upon the main question. The two committees presented their reports, that of the Lords on the 23rd, that of the Commons on the 27th. As the members of both had been, in point of fact, named by the government, they quite agreed, of course, in their view of the matters which had been submitted to their consideration. Referring to what they described as the rising that had taken place in Derbyshire on the 9th of June, the Lords stated that the insurgents engaged in that affair were not formidable for their numbers, but were actuated by an atrocious spirit. The language of many of them, it was affirmed, and particularly of their leaders, left no room to doubt, 'that their objects were the overthrow of the established government and laws; extravagant as those objects were, when compared with the inadequate means which they possessed.' It was afterwards admitted, however, that in the villages through which they passed, a strong indisposition was manifested towards their cause and projects; and the insurrection was characterised as 'of small importance in

itself,' and only a subject of material consideration as confirming the statements in the reports of the secret committees of the preceding session. The fact of this actual insurrection, so clearly proved, and about which there could be no dispute, appeared, it was declared, 'to the committee to have established, beyond the possibility of a doubt, the credit due to the information mentioned in the last report, respecting the plans of more extended insurrection which had previously been concerted, and respecting the postponement of those plans to the 9th or 10th of June.' Reference was also made to the movements in and near Nottingham on the night of the 9th of June; to a meeting of delegates held at Huddersfield on the 6th, and a tumultuous assemblage which took place in that neighbourhood on the night of the 8th; and to the expectations proved to have been entertained in Yorkshire and the other disturbed districts, of powerful support and co-operation from London—'however erroneous such an expectation may have been, with respect to the extent to which it was supposed to have existed'—as further confirmatory of the statements in the same report. But a decided opinion was expressed that, not only in the country in general, but in those districts where the designs of the disaffected were most actively and unremittingly pursued, the great body of the people had remained untainted, even during the periods of the greatest internal difficulty and distress. It was intimated, however, that some of the persons who had been engaged in the late desperate projects, particularly in London, were still active, and appeared determined to persevere, though with decreasing numbers and resources. The report then proceeded to take up the subject of the arrests that had taken place during the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. In addition to the cases of persons against whom bills of indictment had been found by grand juries, and of those who had either been tried or had fled from justice, warrants, it was stated, had been issued by the secretary of state against ten persons who had not been taken, and against forty-four others who had not been brought to trial. Of these, seven had been discharged on examination; one had been released after being finally committed; another had been

discharged on account of illness; another had died in prison. All these arrests and detentions the committee considered to have been fully justified by the circumstances under which they had taken place. 'The committee,' it was added, 'understand that up to a certain period expectations were entertained of being able to bring to trial a large proportion of the persons so arrested and detained, but that these expectations have, from time to time, been unavoidably relinquished.' On the whole, it had appeared to the committee, the report declared in conclusion, that the government, in the execution of the powers vested in it by the two acts of the last session, had acted with due discretion and moderation. The report of the committee of the Commons travelled over the subject by nearly the same road; its expressions, however, upon the different points of the case, were generally stronger, and it adverted to a few additional facts or circumstances. The outbreak at Derby on the night of the 9th of June was designated an insurrection, and described as 'the last open attempt to carry into effect the revolution which had so long been the object of an extended conspiracy.' The trials at Derby, however, were referred to as proving the exemplary conduct of the mass of the population in the country through which the insurrection passed; and the committee had no doubt that the numbers of those who were either pledged or prepared to engage in actual insurrection had generally been much exaggerated by the leaders of the disaffected, from the obvious policy both of giving importance to themselves, and of encouraging their followers. They hoped that the time of delusion might be passing away; but it was nevertheless their opinion that it would still require all the vigilance of government and of the magistracy to maintain the tranquillity which had been restored. 'Your committee,' the report then proceeded, 'have hitherto applied their observations to the lately disturbed districts in the country. In adverting to the state of the metropolis during the same period they have observed with concern that a small number of active and infatuated individuals have been unremittingly engaged in arranging plans of insurrection, in endeavouring to foment disturbances that might lead to it, and in procur-

ing the means of active operations with the ultimate view of subverting all the existing institutions of the country, and substituting some form of revolutionary government in their stead.' The proselytes, however, that those leaders had gained to their cause had not been numerous; nor did the mischief appear to have extended beyond the lower order of artisans, nor to have received countenance from any individuals of higher condition. In conclusion, the committee expressed it as their opinion that the vigilance of the police, and the unrelaxed superintendence of government would probably under present circumstances be sufficient to prevent the agitators from breaking out into any serious disturbance of the public peace; and they declared without hesitation, that the discretion intrusted to government by the acts of the last session had been exercised temperately and judiciously, and that ministers would have failed in their duty as guardians of the peace and tranquillity of the realm, if they had not exercised their powers to the extent which they had done.

Neither report excited much debate when it was presented. Mr. Tierney, however, made some remarks upon that laid before the Commons, which he concluded by observing that 'it was scarcely worth while to oppose seriously the motion for printing a document so absurd, contemptible, and ludicrous.' Meanwhile, on the 25th, a bill had been brought into the Lords, entitled 'A bill for indemnifying persons who, since the 26th of January 1817, have acted in apprehending, imprisoning, or detaining in custody, persons suspected of high treason or treasonable practices, and in the suppression of tumultuous and unlawful assemblies.' In the awkwardness that there would have been in any member of the cabinet proposing such a measure of wholesale sanction and oblivion for any irregularities that might have been committed by himself and his colleagues, this bill of indemnity was presented by the Duke of Montrose, who held the household office of master of the horse. It was warmly and repeatedly debated in both Houses; but all the attacks of the opposition were repelled by overwhelming numbers on the divisions. In the Lords, the second reading was carried, on the 27th of February, by a majority of 100 to 33 votes; and the third

reading, on the 5th of March, by a majority of 93 to 27. If we may judge by the attendance, no very general interest was taken by their lordships in the matter: the number of peers present on the first of these two divisions was no more than 71, including only 15 opponents of the bill; on the second, there were 67 peers present, including 12 of the opposition. The task of supporting the measure was chiefly sustained by Lord Liverpool and the lord chancellor; the principal speakers on the other side were the Marquis of Lansdowne, Lord Erskine, and Lord Holland. A long and strong protest was entered on the journals by these three and seven other peers, in which it was argued that there had manifestly been no widely spread traitorous conspiracy, nor even any extensive disaffection to the government; that tranquillity might have been equally restored by a vigorous execution of the ordinary laws; that the only legal effect of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus being that it suspends the deliverance of the accused, ministers were not entitled to a general indemnity for all the arrests that had been issued upon mere suspicion, or expectation of evidence which was never produced, and for all the numerous and long imprisonments that had followed, until an open and impartial investigation should have taken place; that, from the mistaken principle of the bill, illegal proceedings were equally protected by it, whether they had been meritorious or malicious; and that it was not the occasional resort to secret and impure sources of evidence in cases of clear necessity, but the systematic encouragement of that manner of proceeding, that was sanctioned by such a bill as the present. In the Commons, the first reading of the bill was carried, on the 9th of March, by a majority of 190 to 64; the second reading, on the 10th, by 89 to 24; the committal, on the 11th, by 238 to 65; the third reading, on the 13th, by 82 to 23. Then, after one or two amendments had been negatived, the bill was passed, Mr. Brougham declaring that, although he and his friends would not again divide the House, they were as desirous at that moment as ever to avow their hostility to the detestable principle of the measure, and Mr. Tierney following him with the declaration that he believed it to

be one of the most detestable measures ever introduced into parliament. The discussions throughout had been conducted in a tone of considerable asperity, rising at times to passionate vehemence. The most remarkable speeches made against the bill were those of Mr. Lambton (afterwards Earl of Durham), Sir Samuel Romilly, and Mr. Brougham. The charge of the measure was taken by the attorney-general (Sir William Garrow); the other principal speakers in support of it were the solicitor-general (Sir Samuel Shepherd), Mr. Canning, and Mr. Lamb (late Viscount Melbourne), who on this occasion left his party, as he had also done in voting for the Suspension Bills of the preceding session. Canning spoke on the motion for going into committee; and one passage of his speech raised a great clamour, which was long kept up. Referring to certain petitioners who had come before the House with complaints of harsh treatment to which they had been subjected, after being arrested under the suspension, he designated one of them, whose case had been made the theme of much pathetic eloquence, as 'the revered and ruptured Ogden.' There was some controversy at the time as to whether the latter epithet was correctly reported; but there is no doubt that it was the word he employed. The fact was that Ogden, while he lay in confinement, had been cured of a rupture of twenty years' standing at the public expense, for which, and for his treatment in all other respects, he had at the time expressed himself in the highest degree grateful; yet he had afterwards declared, in his petition, that the disease had been brought on the first day of his imprisonment in Horsemonger Lane jail, by the ponderous irons with which he was loaded on his journey thither from Manchester; and that, after being allowed to remain in agony for sixteen hours, he had with difficulty prevailed upon two surgeons, who were sent for the next morning, to perform an operation, under which they declared that, from his age, seventy-four, there was every reason to apprehend that he would die. His petition was made up for the greater part of an elaborate description of the said operation, garnished with every detail that could most excite horror and disgust. In reality, the operation had not been performed till after he had lain in

confinement, and been released from his irons, for more than four months. These facts Canning stated to the House in the same sentence in which he employed the contemptuous expression that was so eagerly taken hold of; but they were as carefully kept back by the parties who so perseveringly quoted and repeated his words for their own purposes as they had been by Ogden himself. Yet their truth never has been called in question.

It was not only in the great debates on the address and the Indemnity Bill that ministers were put upon their defence. The opposition took advantage of many other opportunities of attacking their recent conduct. Hone's case, and the general question of informations *ex-officio*, were brought before the Commons on the 3rd of February by Mr. W. Smith, and shortly debated. On the 10th of the same month, Lord Archibald Hamilton brought forward the subject of the late prosecutions instituted against state-prisoners in Scotland, by moving that there should be laid before the House a copy of the proceedings on the trial of Andrew M'Kinley before the Court of Justiciary on the 19th of July. The motion, besides being introduced by a long speech from his lordship, was ably supported by Mr. J. P. Grant and Sir Samuel Romilly, but was negatived on a division by a majority of 136 to 71. The following day, another debate of considerable length took place on a motion of Mr. Fazakerley, that the committee of secrecy should be instructed to inquire and report whether any and what measures had been taken to detect and bring to justice the parties described in one of the reports of the secret committee of last session, as persons who might, by their language and conduct, in some instances have had the effect of encouraging those designs which it was intended they should be only the instruments of detecting. The principal speakers were, in support of the motion, Lord Milton (now Earl Fitzwilliam), Mr. Bennet, Sir S. Romilly, and Mr. Tierney; against it, Mr. Bathurst (chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster), Mr. Wilberforce, the solicitor-general, and Mr. Canning. Wilberforce, however, expressed his strong disapprobation of the employment of spies in any circumstances. The numbers on the division were, for the motion, 52; against

it, 111. The debate, however, brought out the general course of Oliver's proceedings into tolerably clear daylight. On the 17th, Lord Folkestone (the present Earl of Radnor) moved the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the truth of the allegations of Ogden and other persons who had petitioned the House, complaining of their treatment under the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act. What they chiefly complained of, however, was their having been imprisoned at all. His lordship's speech was answered by Lord Castlereagh, Mr. Wilberforce, and the attorney-general, and the motion was supported by Sir Francis Burdett, Sir S. Romilly, and other members; but it was negatived on a division by a majority of 167 to 58. Two days after, in the Lords, a motion by the Earl of Carnarvon to refer certain petitions of other imprisoned parties, which had been presented to that House, to the secret committee, was negatived without a division, after speeches in its favour from the mover, from Earl Grosvenor, Lord King, and Lord Holland; and against it, from Lord Sidmouth, Earl Bathurst, and the Earl of Liverpool. Finally, on the 5th of March, another debate on the proceedings of the government spies and informers was brought on in the Commons by Mr. G. Philips, who, after referring to certain petitions—one of these was from Samuel Bamford—presented on previous days, moved that it was the duty of the House to investigate the nature and extent of the practices therein alleged to have been pursued by Oliver and others. The votes upon this motion were, ayes, 69; noes, 162. In the debate it was opposed, as the others of a similar character or tendency had all been, by Wilberforce, notwithstanding that Tierney, who spoke before him, had expressed his full concurrence in the doctrine that the employment of spies and informers by a government was indefensible in any circumstances, and his vote had been distinctly claimed as due to that principle, which he had been the first to proclaim. He objected to the motion as loose, vague, and indefinite. Let a definite motion be made, he said, and he would support it. He could compare the present motion, and some others like it, to nothing else than a pack of hounds in full cry, scouring the fields and starting a hare in every

corner. The most sober, and perhaps the most sensible, view was that taken by Lord Stanley (the present Earl of Derby), who said, that 'he should support the motion, but not on the ground that ministers were guilty of employing spies for the purpose of fomenting disturbances in the country. His belief was that Oliver and others had been solely employed to discover what was doing in the disturbed districts. Where blame was fairly to be cast on ministers was, he thought, in the manner in which those spies were chosen. Though ministers did not warrant the fomenting of disturbances, yet they left it in the power of those acting under them to do so. . . . . He thought ministers had been much calumniated; but they would be most so by themselves, if they refused to inquire into those acts, when inquiry, according to their own statement, would fully acquit them of the charges laid against them.'

Such was the course of the main struggle in which the two parties tried their strength: for the history of the remaining business of the session a summary of results must suffice. Many subjects were taken up, and, no doubt, something was effected by the mere discussion of several of them; but very few were actually legislated upon. Early in the session a committee was appointed by the Commons to consider the state of the poor-laws, on the motion of Mr. Sturges Bourne, who had officiated as chairman of a similar committee in the preceding session; and three bills were afterwards brought in on the recommendation of the committee; one for the establishment of select vestries, another for the general amendment of the poor-laws, a third for the special regulation of the law of settlement. But it was soon agreed to postpone the Parish Settlement Bill to the next session; the Poor-law Amendment Bill, after having passed through all its stages in both Houses, was lost through a disagreement between the Lords and Commons in regard to one of its clauses; the Select Vestries Bill alone became law. In the beginning of March, the select committee of the House of Commons on the education of the lower orders, which had already pursued its important inquiries for two sessions, was reappointed on the motion of its chairman, Mr. Brougham.

Besides two reports, which were presented and ordered to be printed towards the end of the session, it originated a bill 'for appointing commissioners to inquire concerning charities in England for the education of the poor,' which passed into a law, though not without suffering some curtailment and mutilation in the Lords, where, indeed, the motion for going into committee upon it was opposed both by the chancellor and Lord Redesdale, but was carried nevertheless by a majority of 10 to 8. In conformity with the recommendation contained in the speech of the prince-regent at the opening of the session, an act was passed 'for building and promoting the building of additional churches in populous parishes,' by means of a grant of one million sterling, to be applied under the direction of commissioners appointed by the crown. Of various attempts made to reform the criminal law, none of any importance were successful, with the exception of a bill brought in by Mr. Bennet for establishing a better system of rewarding persons who had been instrumental in apprehending highway-robbers and other offenders; and another brought in by Mr. G. Bankes for making it illegal to buy game, as it already was to sell it. Sir S. Romilly carried a bill through the Commons for taking away the penalty of death from the offence of stealing from a shop to the value of five shilling; but it was thrown out on the second reading in the Lords, on the motion of the chancellor. The same potent voice prevailed upon their lordships to reject at the same stage, by a majority of 31 to 13, a bill introduced by Lord Erskine, 'to prevent arrests on the charge of libel before indictment found.' In the Commons, however, the government only succeeded in defeating a motion of Sir James Mackintosh, for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the forgery of the Bank of England notes, by proposing an address to the regent, requesting his royal highness to issue a commission under the great seal for the same purpose. A select committee was appointed, on the motion of Mr. Sergeant Onslow, to inquire into the effect of the usury laws, which reported in favour of their appeal; and the honourable member gave notice that he would early in the next session bring in a bill to carry that recommendation into effect. A bill

for the amendment of the election laws brought in by Mr. Wynn was negatived on the third reading in the Commons by a majority of 51 to 44; as was another for the alteration of the law relating to tithes brought in by Mr. Curwen by a majority of 44 to 15 on the second reading. Repeated discussions took place on a bill introduced by Sir Robert Peel (father of the present baronet) for limiting the number of hours during which apprentices and others employed in cotton and other mills and factories should be permitted to work; it passed the Commons, but it was at last dropped for the present session, after being committed in the Lords, where it had encountered a strong opposition, counsel having been allowed by their lordships to be heard, and evidence to be brought forward against it. Mr. J. Smith obtained leave to bring in a bill for the amendment of the bankruptcy-laws; but it appears not to have been persevered with. Nor did anything come of a bill to amend the Copyright Act of 1814, which was brought in by Sir Egerton Brydges, and carried over some stages in the Commons. But a select committee was afterwards appointed to consider the subject, on the motion of Mr. Wynn, which recommended that the Copyright Act should be repealed, except in regard to the delivery of one copy of every new work to the British Museum, the other public libraries being compensated by a fixed pecuniary allowance. On the 2nd of June, Sir Francis Burdett brought forward a scheme of parliamentary reform in a series of twenty-six resolutions—the last divided into six heads—comprising the principles of universal male suffrage, equal electoral districts, elections all on the same day, vote by ballot, and a fresh parliament once in every year at the least; the motion was seconded by Lord Cochrane (the present Earl of Dundonald), who observed that it might probably be the last time he should ever have the honour of addressing the house on any subject, and alluded with great feeling, and apparently amidst the general sympathy of the House, to his own cruel case; afterwards Mr. Brougham, Mr. Canning, and Mr. Lamb, all spoke at considerable length; and then, the vote being taken on the previous question, which had been moved by Canning, the numbers were found to be 106 to none—the

two tellers, Sir Francis Burdett and Lord Cochrane, being left alone on their own side. About a fortnight before this, Sir Robert Heron had moved for leave to bring in a bill to repeal the Septennial Act, and the motion had been supported both by Sir S. Romilly and Mr. Brougham, but it was negatived on a division by a majority of 117 to 42. Most of the leading Whigs voted in the minority.

There was one question about which the keenest interest had suddenly sprung up in Scotland in the course of the preceding year—the reform of the constitution of the burghs of that part of the kingdom. The Scotch burgh-system, as it still existed, had been established by an act of parliament passed in 1469, the general operation of which was to perpetuate in the government of the burghs, if not always the same individuals, at least the same party, and even personal and family interest, by the simple expedient of giving the retiring office-holders in the corporations, or town-councils, the power, for the most part, at the end of each year, of electing their own successors. They generally, of course, either re-elected themselves, or, where that could not be done, brought in, upon a well-understood and rarely violated arrangement, certain confederates or doubles of themselves, who, in like manner, at the end of another twelvemonth, gave place again to their predecessors, and retired for a season into private life. Some constitutions, or *sets*, as they were called, were not quite so close as others; but the slight infusion that was permitted of the popular element was in no case sufficient to give the general body of the burgesses any control over the management of affairs. The reform or breaking up of this close system had been one of the principle objects pursued by the liberal or democratic party in Scotland, in the political agitation that spread over the interval between the American and French wars; but this, like the other projects of change among ourselves which the success of the American revolution had brought forth and fostered, was smothered for the time in the horror and terror produced by that of France, and in the new interests and passions with which the new war filled men's minds. Now, however, after the return of peace, the former zeal upon this

subject, reawakened by what may be accounted an accident, was kept alive and diffused by a remarkable concurrence of circumstances. The movement took its beginning from a singular and unexpected catastrophe which befell the burgh of Montrose. The opposition party there, in the early part of the year 1817, made application to the Court of Session, the supreme civil judicature in Scotland, to reduce or declare invalid the last election of their magistrates, on the ground of certain formal irregularities, and, probably, not a little to their own surprise, obtained a decision in their favour. The effect was to leave the burgh not only without a town-council, but without any means of creating one till it should get a new charter from the crown. In this state of things, application was made to the privy-council; and that body, or, in other words, the government, instead of merely reviving the old constitution, as it might have been expected to do, was induced to hazard the experiment of allowing a certain number of the new magistrates to be elected, as the inhabitants had petitioned they might be, by the general body of the burgesses. This example of a poll election immediately produced the strongest excitement in all the other burghs. Meanwhile some other events contributed to blow the flame. The burgh of Aberdeen found itself compelled to declare itself in a state of bankruptcy, with liabilities to the amount of some hundred thousands of pounds; and the magistrates accompanied this announcement with an address, in which they declared it to be their decided opinion, that the existing mode of election of the town-council, and the management of the town's affairs, were radically defective and improvident, tending to give to individuals or parties an excessive and unnatural preponderance, and to foster and encourage a system of secrecy and concealment, under which the best intentioned magistrates might be prevented from acquiring a sufficient knowledge of the true situation of the burgh. A similar declaration was soon after publicly and formally made by the ruling party in the burgh of Dundee, where also dissatisfaction with the established system had long been general, although the pecuniary concerns of the burgh had not been so grossly mismanaged as in Aberdeen. From this time meetings of

the burgesses and inhabitants began to be held, not only in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, and the other principal burghs, but in many also of those of inferior importance; and the most strenuous measures were taken for bringing about what the Aberdeen magistrates had declared in their address to be imperatively called for—some change in the manner of electing the town-councils, and the securing to the citizens an effectual control over the expenditure of the town's office-bearers. In this state matters were when Lord Archibald Hamilton brought the subject before the House of Commons on the 13th of February. The professed object of his motion was to obtain a copy of the act or warrant of his majesty in council, dated in the preceding September, by which the poll election of magistrates at Montrose had been authorised, and the set of the burgh altered. He did not object to the poll election; but he contended that the granting of the new constitution, while he admittted it to be an improvement upon the old one, and a benefit to the burgh, was the usurpation of an unconstitutional and illegal power on the part of the crown. By this time, in fact, the leaders in the movement had extended their views much beyond the amount of alteration that had been conceded in the case of Montrose, and had also come clearly to see that the reform of the burgh system could not be left in the hands of the crown, but must be sought from parliament. Lord Archibald acknowledged that his present motion was merely preliminary, and that his intention was, having got this point of the legality of the Montrose warrant settled, to call the attention of the House to a more extensive consideration of the subject after Easter. The motion, however, after a short debate, in the course of which ministers contended that Scotch burgh-reform was little else than parliamentary reform under another name, was negatived without a division. Later in the session, the lord advocate (Mr. Maconochie) brought in a bill 'for the better regulating the mode of accounting for the common good and revenues of the royal burghs of Scotland, and for controlling and preventing the undue expenditure thereof.' But this proposed measure was found to give no satisfaction to any party; and the bill, after being read only a first time, was

withdrawn. Nor did Lord Archibald Hamiliton introduce the subject again in the present session.

Unsuccessful attempts were also made by Lord A. Hamilton to urge on the government the abolition of the Scotch commissary-courts, in conformity with the recommendation of a commission of inquiry appointed by royal warrant in 1808; by General Thornton, to repeal the declarations required to be taken in certain cases against the belief of transubstantiation, and asserting the worship of the Church of Rome to be idolatrous; and by Dr. Phillimore, to amend the Marriage Act of 1753, in respect of its making the marriages of infants by licence, without consent of parents or guardians, void *ab initio* if a suit for the avoidance of them should be commenced at any time during the lives of the parties. The principal taxes that were made the subjects of assault were the salt-duties, the leather-tax, and the Irish window-tax. Ministers made no opposition to Mr. Calcraft's motion for a select committee on the salt-duties; and a bill afterwards brought in by the honourable member, on the recommendation of the committee, for reducing the duty on rock-salt, used for agricultural purposes, from £10, to which it had been reduced in the preceding session, to £5 per ton, was passed. Ministers also offered Lord Althorpe a committee on his moving for leave to bring in a bill to repeal the additional duty upon leather imposed in 1812, against which numerous petitions had been presented; but his lordship persisted in going to a division, and the motion was carried by a majority of 94 to 84. The bill, however, was thrown out on the second reading, the numbers on that occasion being—ayes, 130; noes, 136. A committee to consider the expediency of repealing the Irish window-tax was moved for by Mr. Shaw; but, after a debate of some length, the motion was negatived by 67 votes to 51. Finally, it may be noticed, in connection with this subject, that after several remonstrances from Mr. Brougham, ministers agreed to see that proper measures were taken for carrying into effect the destruction of all returns under the abolished income-tax. This had been promised by the chancellor of the exchequer two years before, but the directions then issued had, it appeared, been very imperfectly complied with.

The budget was brought forward by the chancellor of the exchequer on the 20th of April. The greater part of the navy, army, ordnance, and miscellaneous estimates had been already voted; and Mr. Vansittart now stated that the vote for the army, which had last year been £9,412,373, would this year be £8,970,000; that the vote for the navy, which had last year been £7,596,022, would this year be £6,456,800; that the vote for the ordnance, which had last year been £1,270,690, would this year be £1,245,600; that the miscellaneous estimates, which last year amounted to £1,795,000, would this year amount to £1,720,000—without including, however, the million granted for the building of churches, which was to be provided for by an issue of exchequer bills. Altogether, with the addition of £2,500,000 for the interest on exchequer bills and a sinking fund attached to them, and one or two extraordinary items, the total amount of the regular supplies for the service of the year would be £21,011,000, the amount for the last year having been £22,304,091. This was, of course, exclusive of the interest of the debt, which at this time was not quite £30,000,000. No new taxes were proposed, nor the repeal or reduction of any old ones. The principal feature of the finance minister's announcement was a scheme for forming, out of the 3 per cent. stock, a new stock bearing interest at 3½ per cent.; by which a sum of £3,000,000 would be raised for the public service of the year. It was proposed also to fund £27,000,000 of the floating debt, which had accumulated to the inconvenient amount of about £63,000,000.

The session had scarcely commenced when ministers were asked in both Houses whether it was intended that the resumption of cash-payments by the bank should really take place on the 5th of July, as then fixed by law. In reply it was stated that the bank had made ample preparation for resuming its payments in cash at the time fixed by parliament, and that the government knew of nothing in the internal state of the country, or in its political relations with foreign powers, which would render it expedient to continue the restriction; 'but that there was reason to believe that pecuniary arrangements of

foreign powers were going on, of such a nature and extent as might probably make it necessary for parliament to continue the restriction so long as the immediate effects of those arrangements were in operation.' This explanation was treated by the opposition with great contempt. 'The truth was, as it appeared to him,' Mr. Tierney observed, 'that there were some persons in this country very much disposed to continue the restriction if they could find any excuse for it; and as such excuse did not offer itself at home, they looked abroad for it.' In the other House, Lord King declared that the reason assigned by ministers 'was so extraordinary in itself, and so unintelligible to the country, it being impossible to conceive how in reality the negotiation of foreign loans could tend to prevent the resumption of cash-payments by the Bank of England, that it could only be considered as the ostensible reason, and not the real one.' Nevertheless there can be no doubt that the explanation thus denounced was perfectly correct. Mr. Tooke shows that by the latter part of 1817 the value of bank-paper had been virtually restored, and that the bank was then in a position to resume cash-payments. 'And the directors,' he adds, 'so far from taking advantage of the prolonged term of the restriction, were adopting measures for anticipating it; for in the months of April and September, 1817, they actually undertook by public notice to pay, and did pay, a large proportion of their notes in coin.' It is understood that the payments in gold in pursuance of these notices exceeded five millions sterling. Mr. Tooke blames the bank and the government for co-operating to reduce the rate of interest on exchequer bills in the summer of 1817, while it was notorious that negotiations were going forward for the raising of loans to a very large amount by France and others of the continental states. 'The government,' he argues, 'ought to have taken the opportunity of the comparatively high price of stocks in the summer of 1817, to have diminished instead of increasing the unfunded debt; and the bank, instead of extending its advances upon exchequer bills, at a reduced interest, ought, with a view to counteract the effect, which would otherwise be inevitable, of the tendency of British capital

to investment in foreign loans, not only not to have extended its advances, but to have diminished its existing securities.' But now commenced both a depression of the exchanges and a diminution of the circulation from the operation of a fresh set of disturbing causes. 'Foremost among these causes,' Mr. Tooke continues, 'doubtless were the large loans negotiated for the French and Russian governments, the high rate of interest granted by them, and the comparatively low rate in this country, holding out a great inducement for the transmission of British capital to the continent. The importations of corn in the latter part of 1817, and through the whole of 1818, were on a large scale and at high prices, our ports being then open without duty. And there was at the same time, as has before been noticed, a very great increase of our general imports; while a great part of the exports of 1817 and 1818 were speculative and on long credits, the returns for which, therefore, would not be forthcoming till 1819 and 1820. Under these circumstances it is rather matter of surprise that the exchanges were not more depressed, than that they were so much depressed in 1818.' For this state of things the bank and the government might, indeed, have made preparation; they ought at least to have abstained from pursuing a course which gave additional facilities to the negotiation of the foreign loans; but, that mischief having been done, the depression of the exchanges thereby produced certainly furnished a good reason for the postponement of the resumption. A bill was eventually brought into the House of Commons for continuing the restriction till the 5th of July, 1819; various amendments were moved in both Houses, but were only supported by insignificant minorities, and the bill was passed in the end of May. The measure, however, drew two long protests from Lord Lauderdale, in one of which his lordship declared the ground on which it had been introduced and supported—that the raising of foreign loans would drain this country of its coin—to be 'an opinion founded on gross misconception and ignorance of the subject.'

Some rather remarkable proceedings took place in the course of the session in relation to the royal family, no

fewer than four members of which were married in the earlier part of this year. The first of the four marriages was that of the Princess Elizabeth, his majesty's third daughter, to His Serene Highness Frederic Joseph Louis Charles Augustus, Landgrave and Hereditary Prince of Hesse-Homburg, on the 7th of April. In this case the two Houses of parliament were asked only to offer their congratulations to the regent, the queen, and the new-married couple. As the bride had nearly completed her forty-eighth year, her marriage could not be expected to contribute anything towards continuing the line of the old king, who now, notwithstanding his fifteen sons and daughters, twelve of whom were still alive, was left without any descendant beyond the first generation. A few days afterwards, however—on the 13th of April—Lord Liverpool brought down a message from the regent to the Lords, and Lord Castlereagh to the Commons, in which his royal highness informed the House that treaties of marriage were in negotiation between the Duke of Clarence and the Princess (Adelaide Louisa Theresa Caroline Amelia) of Saxe-Meiningen, eldest daughter of the late reigning Duke of Saxe-Meiningen; and also between the Duke of Cambridge and the Princess (Augusta Wilhelmina Louisa) of Hesse, youngest daughter of the Landgrave Frederic, and niece of the Elector of Hesse; and which went on to say, that after the afflicting calamity which the prince and the nation had sustained in the loss of the Princess Charlotte, his royal highness was fully persuaded that the House of Commons would feel how essential it was to the best interests of the country that he should be enabled to make a suitable provision for such of his royal brothers as should have contracted marriages with the consent of the crown. This last expression was designed to intimate both that the proposed provision was not to be extended to the Duke of Sussex, and that it was to comprehend the Duke of Cumberland, who had been married three years ago, to the Princess Frederica Sophia Charlotta, daughter of Frederic V., Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, and previously the wife, first of Frederic Louis Charles, Prince of Prussia, from whom she had been divorced, and, secondly, of Frederic William, Prince of

Solms Braunfels. The Duchess of Cumberland was niece to the queen; but for some unexplained reason, her majesty refused to receive her royal highness after she came over to this country. It was generally understood that the refusal was occasioned by the conduct of the duchess in breaking off a previous negotiation of marriage with the Duke of Cambridge. The Duke of Cumberland, however, was not popular; and when, soon after his marriage, a bill was brought in by ministers to grant him an additional allowance of £6000 a year, advantage was taken of the queen's disapprobation, and the bill, which had been resisted by formidable minorities both on the motion for leave to bring it in and on the first reading, was thrown out on the second reading by a majority of one, the numbers being 126 against 125. It was hoped that now this decision might be reversed. Considerably larger sums were originally contemplated; but ministers were induced, by strong manifestations of adverse feeling both in and out of parliament, to pause and modify their proposition; and they determined to ask only an additional £10,000 a year for the Duke of Clarence, and £6000 for the Dukes of Cumberland and Cambridge, and for the Duke of Kent, if he too should marry. When Lord Castlereagh, on the 15th, moved a resolution to the effect that £10,000 a year should be granted to the Duke of Clarence, Mr. Canning observed that in voting for this sum 'they would vote only for one-half of the sum originally proposed—a sum the propriety of which both his noble friend and himself thought then, and still thought, maintainable by fair argument, but which they had no hesitation in surrendering to the expressed opinion of that House.' But on Mr. Sumner moving that the £10,000 should be reduced to £6000, this amendment was carried by a majority of 193 to 184. 'The result,' it is stated, 'was received with loud shouts of approbation; amidst which Lord Castlereagh rose and observed that, since the House had thought proper to refuse the larger sum to the Duke of Clarence, he believed he might say that the negotiation for the marriage might be considered at an end.' On the following day, his lordship informed the House that the duke declined availing himself of the

inadequate sum which had been voted to him. He then proposed the £6000 a year for the Duke of Cambridge, which was carried, but not till after a debate of some length, and a division, in which the numbers were 177 for the resolution, and 95 against it. Rising again, his lordship moved that a similar grant should be made to the Duke of Cumberland; but this motion, after a warm debate, was negatived by a majority of 143 to 136, 'Loud cheering,' we are told, 'took place in the House when the result of the division was known.' On the 13th of May, another message was brought down announcing that the prince-regent had given his consent to a marriage between the Duke of Kent and Her Serene Highness Mary Louisa Victoria, daughter of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, widow of Enrich Charles, Prince of Leiningen, and sister of Prince Leopold. Of all these royal marriages this was the one which the heart of the country went most along with; the Duke of Kent had attached himself to the popular party, and the relationship of the lady to Prince Leopold and the lamented Princess Charlotte was of itself sufficient to awaken a strong interest in her favour. If the nation might have had its wish, it would have been from the first that that should happen which has actually fallen out, that to the issue of this marriage the inheritance of the crown should descend. Yet even the grant of the additional £6000 a year to the Duke of Kent was stoutly opposed in the Commons; 51 members, among whom were Lord Althorpe, Mr. Coke of Norfolk, Lord Folkestone, Mr. Lambton, and Mr. Tierney, voting against it. The number of votes in its favour, however, was more than four times as many. Meanwhile, the public had learned, with some surprise, that the marriage of the Duke of Clarence was to take place after all. That of the Duke of Cambridge was solemnised on the 1st of June; those of the Dukes of Clarence and Kent on the 13th of the month following. In connection with the subject of the royal family, it may be here mentioned that the portion of the Regency Act relating to the custody of the king's person was this session altered by a short bill which ministers introduced, repealing the clause which made it necessary that parliament should reassemble immediately in case of the death of the

queen, and also adding four members to the council appointed to assist her majesty. As at first drawn up, the bill gave the nomination of the four new members to her majesty; but it was ultimately conceded that they should be appointed by parliament. In other words, their names were inserted in the bill. What occasioned this measure was an illness with which the queen had been attacked, but she had nearly recovered before the bill passed.

On the subject of the slave-trade acts were passed for carrying into effect a treaty with Spain, and a convention with Portugal. The Spanish treaty, signed at Madrid on the 23rd of September in the preceding year, went the full length of declaring the traffic in slaves illegal, from the 30th of May 1820, throughout the entire dominions of his Catholic majesty, and of recognising the right of search on the part of the two contracting powers to be exercised by vessels of war, provided with special instructions for that purpose. It was stipulated that the sum of £400,000 should be paid by Great Britain to Spain, in compensation for losses sustained by the subjects of his Catholic majesty engaged in the traffic. The convention with Portugal, a much more important power in reference to this matter, did not accomplish nearly so much for the interests of humanity and civilisation; all that his most faithful majesty would consent to do being to abolish the traffic in slaves carried on by his subjects in any part of the coast of Africa lying north of the equator. This was done by a royal *alvara*, or law, given at Rio Janeiro, on the 6th of May in the present year. The subject of the condition and treatment of the slaves in several of our West India colonies was also brought before the House of Commons in a succession of motions by Sir S. Romilly; none of which were opposed, but which resulted in nothing except the production of some papers, and the appointment of a select committee to consider certain cases of cruelty alleged to have taken place in the island of Nevis.

The principal subject which occupied parliament during the last six weeks of the session was the renewal of the Alien Act. This measure, differing altogether from the Alien Act which subsisted during the war, had been first introduced after the Peace of Amiens in 1802. It no

longer fixed the residence of aliens, but only reserved to government and to magistrates the power of removing any of them who might become objects of suspicion. Nor had it ever been enacted as a permanent law. When it was reintroduced, after the peace in 1814, its duration had been limited to two years; and in 1816 it had been renewed for the same term. On the latter occasion, however, it had encountered the strongest opposition in its passage through parliament. And now, when it was proposed to be continued for two years more, the fight against it was resumed by the Whig party, and the ground contested with the greatest obstinacy at every step. Its opponents, in the Commons, even divided the House on the motion for leave to bring in the bill, meeting the majority of 55 votes in its favour with a minority of 18. This was on the 5th of May. Hostile motions for papers were then made by Mr. Lambton in the one House and by Lord Holland in the other, Mr. Lambton pushing his to a division, when 30 opposition patriots were counted against 68 ministerialists. On the 15th, the second reading in the Commons, supported by 97 votes, was resisted by 35. Another division took place on the motion for going into committee; and several more in committee. On the 22nd, after it had been read a third time, first Mr. Brougham, and then Sir S. Romilly, divided the House on clauses which they proposed to insert in the bill; nor, when both had been negatived, was even the last question of all, 'That the bill do pass,' suffered to be carried without another division. On this concluding trial of strength, the numbers were 94 against 29. The first discussion of the measure in the Lords took place on the motion for going into committee, which was made by Lord Sidmouth on the 1st of June. But by this time a discovery had been made. It had been found that, by the act of the Scotch parliament, passed in 1685, for establishing the Bank of Scotland, all foreigners holding shares to a certain amount in that bank became thereby naturalised subjects of Scotland, while by the Act of Union all subjects of Scotland were naturalised in England. Lord Sidmouth therefore announced that he should propose the insertion of a clause to prevent the object of the bill from being

defeated by parties taking advantage of that enactment. The motion for going into committee was carried by a majority of 34 to 15; and then, the clause by which it was proposed to meet the old Scotch act having been reduced by considerable tinkering to what was considered a proper form, was carried by another of 42 to 20. It deprived all foreigners of the privilege of naturalisation acquired by holding bank-shares, who had purchased their shares since the 28th of April. The parties whom it affected petitioned the next day to be heard by council against this retrospective disqualification; but that was refused, after another division; and, the standing orders having been suspended, on which question there were three more divisions, the bill, with the added clause, was the same day read a third time and passed. But when it was sent down to the Commons three days afterwards, it was met there, not only by another petition from the parties affected by the disqualifying clause, but by an objection founded upon the privileges of the House. It was observed that one right which foreigners acquired upon being naturalised was to import goods into the country at lower duties than aliens; and that, therefore, the Lords had by their amendment introduced a money-clause into the bill—an interference on the part of the other House which the Commons never submitted to. On the Speaker being appealed to, he gave it as his opinion that this objection was fatal to the clause; upon which Lord Castlereagh consented at once that the clause should be negatived, and the bill passed without it. On the following day, when Lord Liverpool, on the bill being brought back to the Lords, moved that that House should not insist upon its amendment, the opposition again divided in favour of a motion for deferring the further consideration of the matter till the next day of meeting, but were of course beaten as usual. It was now announced that a bill would be brought in to supply the place of the defeated clause; and on the 8th, leave to bring in such a bill was moved for by Lord Castlereagh in the Commons. The bill was made considerably more comprehensive than the clause had been, for it had been discovered that there were some English and Irish acts to be guarded against, as well as

the Scotch one; at the same time it was divested of the retrospective effect which had been so much objected to. An unsuccessful attempt was even made by the opposition to prevent it from coming into operation till three or four days after it should have been enacted, on the ground that it would otherwise come upon the country without proper notice. Ministers, however, contended that people had had notice enough from the agitation the subject had already undergone in parliament; and so, the standing orders having been again suspended, the bill went through all its stages and was passed in the Commons on the same day on which it was brought in. On the day following it was hurried in the same manner through the Lords.

This severe struggle was perhaps not altogether inspired and sustained by the particular measure respecting the principle or details of which it professed to be carried on. The moment was one at which time gained or lost was of peculiar importance. Ministers, as we have seen, had, by an act passed in the latter part of the session, got rid of the clause in the Regency Act which provided that the parliament should immediately reassemble in case of the death of the queen. But it still remained the law that it should so reassemble on either the demise of the crown or the death of the regent. The termination of the old king's protracted life could not now be far off, and was likely enough to happen any day. That event would revive the present parliament, even notwithstanding a dissolution, if the day appointed by the writs of summons for the assembling of a new parliament had not arrived before it took place.* In these circumstances ministers were very impatient to bring the session to a close, and to get the new parliament called together as expeditiously as possible. The unexpected discovery of the old Scotch act, enabling the opposition to renew and continue the battle on the subject of the Alien Bill, and so to have the benefit for a little longer of whatever the chapter of accidents might turn up, occasioned the loss of about a week. At last, however, on the 10th of June, the day after the supple-

* The old parliament would have assembled if the new one had not actually met, but for an act of the preceding session, the 57 Geo. III. c. 157.

mentary Alien Bill, as it was called, was passed, the regent came to the House of Peers, and at once put an end to the session and dissolved the parliament. This was a very unusual, indeed in modern and constitutional times quite an unprecedented, proceeding. The last instance in which the same thing had been done was when Charles II., in March 1681, suddenly and angrily dismissed his fifth and last parliament, which he had called together at Oxford, after it had sat a week. This precedent was exactly followed in the present case; now, as then, as soon as the speech from the throne had been delivered, the lord chancellor, by the royal command, declared the parliament dissolved. The course thus taken excited much surprise and comment; and it also threw the Commons into considerable perplexity. When the members, after the ceremony which had made them members no longer, returned to their own House, and Mr. Manners Sutton, lately their Speaker, was proceeding to read the speech at the table, as is usual after a prorogation, Mr. Tierney objected to his doing so, as implying some approbation of the mode of dissolution that had been adopted, which he regarded as an insult to parliament. To this it was rejoined by Lord Castlereagh, in a different tone, that at any rate they had better let the subject alone for the present, in case they should be charged with attempting to deliberate as a House of Commons, when they were only a meeting of private gentlemen, and might incur a *præmunire*. In point of fact, the speech was not read. The proclamation for calling the new parliament was issued the same afternoon; and the writs were made returnable on the 4th of August. Nothing could now bring the old parliament to life again except the death of the king or the regent within the interval of fifty-five days.

CHAPTER XIV.

General Election—Strike of Manchester Spinners—Death of the Queen—Death of Sir S. Romilly—Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle—State of the Country—Revival of the Reform Agitation.

THE general election kept the country in an uproar from the middle of June till the middle of July. The interest that was excited by many of the contests was almost unprecedented; and in several instances the mob proceeded far beyond its ordinary licence and violence. The contest at Westminster in particular drew and fixed universal attention, both by the extreme character of the outrages which took place, and by the doubt that continued to hang over the issue almost to the last. Of the two late members only Sir Francis Burdett stood again; Lord Cochrane, about to set out for South America to take the command of the naval forces of the state of Chili, declined to come forward. In these circumstances different sections of the electors looked about in different quarters. One portion of the Radicals, with an amusing ignorance of their man, applied to Mr. Wetherell (afterwards Sir Charles) to represent them; Mr. Wetherell had acquired great glory by his successful defence of Dr. Watson in the preceding year, on his trial of seven days for high treason; and these worthy Westminster electors imagined the learned gentleman to be as good a patriot as themselves. Mr. Wetherell, who had sat in the late parliament for Shaftesbury, got off on the plea of his professional engagements obliging him to give up the House of Commons; but he could not resist transfixing the deputation that waited upon him, by expressing his hope that they would find some other independent candidate, with whom they might unite their efforts to rescue the city of Westminster from the disgrace it had so long endured. The disgrace consisted simply in its having been represented by the two most thorough-going and far-going reformers in parlia-

ment. It was then determined by either the same wise men, or some other small section of Sir Francis Burdett's supporters, to put forward, in conjunction with him, his personal friend the Hon. Douglas Kinnaird, like himself the advocate of universal suffrage, annual parliaments, and the ballot. At the same time the regular Whig party addressed an invitation to Sir Samuel Romilly, which he accepted. Soon after, Captain Sir Murray Maxwell addressed the electors, offering to serve them on what he described as principles of attachment to his king and veneration for the constitution—in other words, as a Tory and partisan of the existing government. Sir Murray was a very gallant and distinguished naval officer, and had lately displayed the highest professional qualities on occasion of his ship, the *Alceste*, being shipwrecked on one of the Loo-Choo Islands, in bringing back Lord Amherst from his embassy to China; but the thought of his standing for Westminster seems to have been suggested to his friends or to himself principally by the consideration that a candidate from the quarter-deck might probably have a good chance in a place lately represented by Lord Cochrane. As soon as he announced himself, however, the Tories rallied round him. The election commenced on the 18th of June; and Covent Garden was a scene of almost incessant confusion and riot from that morning till the evening of the 4th of July. In addition to the four candidates we have mentioned, Major Cartwright and Mr. Henry Hunt, the then friend of Cobbett, and commonly known as Orator Hunt, were proposed; the show of hands was declared to be in favour of him and Romilly; but, nevertheless, he and the Major polled very few votes: the latter, who withdrew after the third day, only 23; Hunt, who obstinately persevered through the fifteen days, only 84, of which no more than 11 were the produce of the last eight days. Nor did Mr. Kinnaird continue the struggle longer than Major Cartwright, having in the three days polled only 65 votes. Romilly, on the other hand, took the lead from the first, and remained safe at the head of the poll. The only contest was between Burdett and Maxwell. The latter was assailed by the populace, both with execrations and missiles of a more substantial kind,

from almost the first moment of his appearance on the hustings. On the first day he was struck with a stone on the right eye. For the first four days, nevertheless, he kept ahead of his antagonist; at the close of the fourth day's polling the numbers stood—for Maxwell, 1726; for Burdett, only 1263. This position of the two candidates infuriated the mob; and on the evening of the fifth day, as he was returning from the hustings, Sir Murray was so severely handled as to place his life for some time in danger. He was not able again to appear in public. Both on the fourth and fifth days, too, great exertions were made by Burdett's voting friends; by that fifth evening they had the satisfaction of seeing the gallant captain second in the race, the entire poll being announced to be —for Maxwell, 2169; for Burdett, 2171: and similar efforts being continued on the following day, this difference of two was increased to very nearly two hundred. Sir Murray never recovered his ground; and the final numbers were—Romilly, 5339; Burdett, 5238; Maxwell, 4808. On one of the days of the election, the Riot Act had to be read, and the military called out. The election for the city of London, though conducted with much less violence, was almost equally exciting. Of the four late members, Sir James Shaw declined to come forward again for private reasons; the candidates were the other three, Curtis, Atkins, and Wood, together with three new men, Waithman, Thorpe, and Wilson. The second day placed Wood and these three at the head of the poll, and at the close of the election they were found in the same position, although down to the very last day a close and doubtful struggle was maintained between Thorpe and Curtis. On the morning of that sixth day, Tuesday, the 23rd of June, Curtis had a majority of 129; but the committees of his three friends who headed the poll now came to the rescue of Thorpe; the consequence was that by half-past eleven o'clock he was up with his antagonist; by twelve he was 35 ahead of him; and in the end the six competitors came in in the following order: Wood, 5700; Wilson, 4829; Waithman, 4603; Thorpe, 4335; Curtis, 4224; Atkins, 1688. The four new members were all Whigs; Wood, who was re-elected, had been the only Whig, or anti-

ministerialist, among the old ones. Another contest that attracted still more general attention was that for the representation of Westmoreland, where the late members, Viscount Lowther and his uncle the Hon. Colonel Lowther, were opposed by Mr. Brougham, in the character of champion of the independence of the county, and its deliverer from family thraldom. All that an eloquent tongue could do was done by the new candidate; and he was at the head of the poll on the evening of the first day; but after this he fell more and more behind every hour; and on the evening of the fourth day, when he had polled only 889 votes against Colonel Lowther's 1157, he gave in. Besides about 70 members who had sat in the last parliament for other places, there were about 190 new members returned in all. Of these about 80 were brought in after contests, in addition to about a dozen old members so returned for new places. There were altogether about 115 contested elections; so that, the entire number of constituencies in the empire being then 380, about one seat in three was disputed. Of those that were undisputed, however, about one-half may have been nomination seats. Still the contests, perhaps, were not so numerous as they would have been but for the circumstances which made it almost certain that the next parliament would be a very short one, seeing that the death of the king, whenever it should happen, would necessarily dissolve it in six months thereafter. That seats which were to be held by so unusually precarious a tenure should be so eagerly sought in so many instances, was a strong evidence of the excited state of party feeling. The hopes of the Whigs, in fact, were now higher than they had ever been since they had been last in office ten years ago. Mr. Ward, who had now returned to England—though, having lost his election at Ilchester, which he had lately represented, he was, as he says, for the first time since he had been a boy, out of parliament—thus writes to Dr. Coplestone in the end of August: 'The next session is likely to be more interesting than the last. Opposition comes into parliament in rather greater numbers, and in far greater spirits. It is marshalled, too, under an able and experienced leader [Tierney]. The government don't seem much beloved. It

has quite spent the popularity of the war. There seems, too, to be a great deal of discontent in the country, which may on some occasion be brought to bear upon party objects. I should be able less to understand what was the cause of this discontent if I did not know that peace and prosperity have always a tendency to produce it. We have had peace for some time, and we seem rising fast to prosperity, for I observe the old symptoms of it again—credit, building, improving, and the increasing luxury of the middling classes.'

The elections were scarcely well over when considerable uneasiness began to be spread by the accounts that came from Manchester of the temper and proceedings of a portion of the working-classes there. Much dissatisfaction had prevailed for some time among the cotton-spinners on the subject of wages; and so early as before the end of June they had struck work to the number of about fifteen thousand. Of course, as days and weeks passed on, and they felt more and more the pressure of diminished resources, while their hopes of attaining their object by peaceable or passive resistance were also dying away, there was the greater danger that they might be tempted to deviate into something illegal. It is probable, also, that from the first, although no satisfactory proofs of combination could be obtained, the usual means of intimidation at least, if not of actual violence, were employed to prevent those who were willing to work from continuing to do so, and to compel them to join the strike. But it appears not to have been till about the beginning of August that the authorities considered themselves called upon even to make any preparations in contemplation of a possible breach of the peace. By that time, if not before, the spinners had begun to assemble in processions, which were regarded as being intended to make a formidable display of their numerical strength; and, the government having been applied to, some troops were ordeed to proceed to the town. The magistrates also, on the 1st of that month, issued a public notice, in which they described the spinners as being in the habit, not only of assembling in great numbers and parading the streets, but of besetting particular factories, and forcibly preventing the well-

disposed from continuing to work; and intimated their determination to use every exertion to bring to punishment the persons concerned in these proceedings. No collision, however, took place till the 2nd of September, on which day the spinners, having been joined by a large body of others from Stockport, after a procession through the streets as usual, repaired to a factory in Ancoat's Lane, and, it is said, had actually begun to force their way into the building, when some soldiers and police that were stationed in it fired and wounded three of them, one of whom soon after died. A party of dragoons and infantry then arrived and dispersed the mob, which some calculations made to have amounted to not less than 30,000. A coroner's jury that sat upon the body of the man who had been killed brought in a verdict of justifiable homicide. This affair appears to have put an end to the disturbances, and even to have broken up the strike. On the 11th, Lord Sidmouth, who had gone in the beginning of August to spend a few weeks in the west of England, but had been suddenly recalled to town by the alarming reports received at the Home Office, writes as follows to Lord Ellenborough: 'The combination at Manchester is now nearly dissolved, and tranquillity is completely restored. The verdict of the jury in the case of the person killed in the attack on Gray's mill, the arrest of Johnson, Baguley, and Drummond, who are lodged in Chester jail, the failure of pecuniary supplies, and the admirable arrangements of Sir John Byng, in conjunction with the civil authorities—one of the chief objects of which was to afford protection to all persons disposed to return to their work—have effected this fortunate change.' This affair, indeed, in its origin, and so far as it had actually proceeded, was merely a dispute about wages; but as such it proved at any rate that all was not gold that glittered in the present show of national prosperity, and that the busy commercial speculation that had sprung up had not prevented the existence of much distress among large classes of the people. Wages, in fact, were not such as to compensate for the high prices of food.

Except, however, that meetings for radical reform continued to be held occasionally in London and elsewhere, the

tranquillity of the country remained undisturbed for the rest of the year. Almost the only other domestic event of a public or historical character that occurred in the course of the year was the death of the queen, which took place on the 17th of November. Her majesty was in her seventy-fifth year, and had been suffering for about three months from dropsy in the chest. The act passed in the last session of parliament, amending the Regency Act, prevented this event from having any immediate political consequences. A much more profound sensation was produced by another death which happened about the same time, that of Sir Samuel Romilly, who destroyed himself on the 2nd of November, four days after the loss of his wife, in a paroxysm of insanity, brought on by that severe shock falling upon a mind previously weakened and shattered by overburdening professional labours and anxieties. He was sixty-one years of age; and he had attained the highest position, both in the courts of law and in parliament, which ability and character without office could confer. Nor was any man more universally beloved. His late triumphant return for Westminster, where he had been brought in at the head of the poll, without having either spent a shilling or asked a vote, or even once made his appearance on the hustings, was a sufficient testimony to his general popularity, and also, it may be added, to the purity of conduct, and elevation above all popularity-hunting arts, by which, or notwithstanding which, he had acquired it. But the charm of his beautiful nature won its way even where wide difference of political principle and sentiment might have been expected to create some prejudice against him. His death was acutely felt, we are told, by Lord Eldon, before whom he had been for many years in daily and pre-eminent practice. 'The chancellor,' it is related, 'came into court next morning obviously much affected. As he took his seat he was struck by the sight of the vacant place within the bar which Romilly was accustomed to occupy. His eyes filled with tears. "I cannot stay here," he exclaimed; and, rising in great agitation, broke up his court.' Within little more than a month after Romilly, on the 13th of December, died another great lawyer, of equally opposite

politics and temper, Lord Ellenborough. This remarkable man, whose talents, so long as he continued in his vigour, were of the most commanding character, seemed never to have recovered from his discomfiture by Hone in the preceding year. We have already quoted the terms in which he wrote to Lord Sidmouth on the day after the last of the three trials and acquittals. The purpose of resignation which he announced in that letter he had carried into effect about three months before his death. He was, when he died, in his sixty-ninth year, and he had presided in the court of King's Bench since April 1802. In August this same year had died, at the age of eighty-five, Warren Hastings, whose leading counsel Lord Ellenborough (then Mr. Law) had been throughout the five years of his memorable trial before the House of Lords, since the termination of which a quarter of a century had now elapsed. And, remarkably enough, before the year was out, Hastings had been followed to the grave by the most pertinacious and vindictive of his accusers and enemies, Sir Philip Francis. He died at the age of seventy-eight, on one of the last days of December, when there wanted only about a month to make exactly half a century since the appearance of the first of the famous Letters of Junius, of which he has been supposed to be the author.

The most important event belonging to the general history of Europe which marks this year is the congress of the allied sovereigns held at Aix-la-Chapelle for the purpose of withdrawing the army of occupation from France. Of the 150,000 troops left in that country in 1815, 30,000, of which 6000 were English, had been withdrawn last year; and, although it had been originally stipulated that the occupation might extend to five years, it had been for some time universally expected and understood that it would be actually put an end to now at the end of three. So much was this the case, that the holding of the congress was looked upon as little more than going through a necessary form. And, in point of fact, little or nothing of deliberation or discussion appears to have taken place. The ministers of the several powers, including the Duke of Wellington and Lord Castlereagh, as representing

his Britannic majesty, had collected at Aix-la-Chapelle, by the 25th of September; the King of Prussia arrived the next day; the Emperors of Austria and Russia on the 28th. Two preliminary conferences were held on the 30th and 31st; and at a third, held on the 2nd of October, the evacuation was unanimously agreed upon. An envoy was immediately despatched to Paris, where the news was received on the 5th. A few more conferences were held, to settle the time and manner of the evacuation, and also to determine how much of the pecuniary indemnity of 700 millions of francs, imposed upon France, still remained due. But by the 9th, an agreement embracing all points was drawn up in the form of a treaty, and signed by the ministers of the several powers; and on the 17th the sovereigns affixed their own signatures. It was settled that the army of occupation should be entirely withdrawn by the 30th of November, or sooner if possible; and the sum remaining to be paid by France was definitively affixed at 265 millions of francs. Afterwards, on the representation of the Duke of Richelieu, a slight modification was made by another protocol in the arrangements respecting the dates at which the successive instalments of the indemnity should be discharged by France. The removal of whatever apprehensions and objections might have been entertained in any quarter to the decision thus come to by the allied sovereigns, is understood to have been chiefly due to the efforts of Louis XVIII. and the Duke of Wellington; and the smoothing away of any difficulties that arose after the congress met is attributed principally to his grace. 'Sufficient justice,' writes a recent French historian, 'has not generally been done to the Duke of Wellington for the liberal and faithful manner in which he protected the interests of France throughout all the negotiations with foreign powers. . . . The duke was highly favourable to France in everything that related to the evacuation of her territory. His position as generalissimo of the army of occupation gave a great weight to his advice on this question; he was consulted at every step, and his opinion was always given in terms expressive of an elevation of view and sentiment which did honour to his character. . . . . With the cessa-

tion of the armed occupation, the duke was to lose a great position in France, that of generalissimo of the allied powers, and one which made him, in some sort, a member of the government; he was to sacrifice also an appointment of immense pecuniary value; moreover, his grace knew the personal opinion of Lord Castlereagh, and of a large portion of the English aristocracy, to be that the continuance of the armed occupation was necessary. All these interests did not check him; he was of opinion that this measure of precaution ought to cease, seeing that not only had France duly discharged the stipulated payments, but that her government appeared to present the character of order and of duration; this opinion was most influential at the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle.' That town did not exhibit so much splendour and festive gaiety as had been seen four years back at Vienna; but it was still a busy, animated, and brilliant scene. 'We never saw so many stars in our lifetime,' somebody wrote from the place in a letter which has been printed; 'they appear as numerous at Aix-la-Chapelle as in the firmament; every sovereign is surrounded with his constellation.' Many entertainments were given; and plenty of dissipation and intrigue of every kind—except, perhaps, political—went on. Numbers of students from the different German universities, in their antiquated and grotesque academic dresses, divided attention with the Cossacks about the household of the Emperor Alexander. Among the undiplomatic celebrities were Madame Catalani and Sir Thomas Lawrence; the latter sent by the prince-regent to take the portraits of the Emperors of Austria and Russia and the King of Prussia. Another arrival which excited some curiosity was that of Robert Owen of New Lanark, then in the earliest stage of his unwearied advocacy and agitation of the new scheme of society—not ill described in the letter we have just quoted as 'a plan to civilise the lower classes by *parking*, if we may so speak, indigent families in villages, where they would be subjected to a regimen combined of quakerism and jesuitism.' Mr. Owen was presented to the Emperor Alexander, and had a long conference on the subject of his benevolent and impracticable theories. But his imperial majesty was also, it is said,

beset by various philanthropists and regenerators of the other sex, who sought, by means of prophetic ejaculations and an imposing style of attire, to acquire the same influence over his imagination that Madame Krudener had exercised some years before. The anti-slavery party in England, too, sent Mr. Clarkson to endeavour to bring over Alexander to their views. This was done on the suggestion, or at least by the advice, of Wilberforce, ever watchful for any opportunity of promoting the great object of his life. 'Castlereagh will tell you,' he wrote to Mr. J. Stephen in August, 'and tell you truly, that the congress will have nothing to do with abolitionism in any form. But my own idea is that the Emperor of Russia may be likely to come forward and befriend a proposal to make the slave-trade piracy, after the abolition of it by Spain and Portugal.' He had despaired of bringing over the English government to his views, 'conceiving Castlereagh to be a fish of the cold-blooded kind.' 'But,' he goes on, 'you have hit on the bait for him, if he be to be caught at all, by the exhibition of political considerations affecting our own interests, rather than any prospects of general philanthropy—not that he would not recognise these. Now I fear he would dislike our having any agent at Aix-la-Chapelle. I should be rejoiced, indeed, if he would suffer some one to go as his travelling depositary of tropical intelligence; but I have no notion he would, and it could not be done without his consent. It would not be at all proper for you to go, which Macaulay suggested. I fear I could not do it without impropriety. But Clarkson seems formed by Providence for the purpose. . . . . He would be regarded as half Quaker, and may do eccentric things with less offence than you or I could. I can truly say I have no suspicion of Castlereagh. It would be most unjust to harbour any such notion after all his pains and efforts. But in his public character he might be unable, without a violation of diplomatic propriety, to do a thing which might be very usefully done by a *nemo* who should apply his lever to the great Alexander.' The emperor, however, we are told, would not be moved. The congress would do nothing for the abolitionists; and Mr. Clarkson only obtained from Alexander an audience of an hour and

a half, with an assurance that he entirely entered into their views. In fact, the sovereigns had resolved that their present meeting, which they themselves called, not a congress, but simply a *réunion*, should be devoted to the question of the evacuation of France exclusively; and it had been distinctly announced before they met that no other business would be taken up. The question of the slave-trade, nevertheless, was entered upon at some of the conferences, and formed the subject of some correspondence after the sovereigns separated. They remained together till the middle of November; on the 15th of which month was signed their last document, a declaration, as it was entitled, in which they referred to the treaty or convention of the 9th of October, as the accomplishment of the work of peace, and the completion of the political system destined to insure its solidity; and, having described their union as not tending to any new political combination, to any change in the relations sanctioned by existing treaties, but having no other object than the maintenance of peace, went on to profess its fundamental basis to be their invariable resolution never to depart either among themselves, or in their relations with other states, from the strictest observance of the principles of the rights of nations; and concluded by avowing their solemn conviction that their duties towards God and the peoples whom they governed, made it peremptory on them to give to the world, as far as in their power, an example of justice, of concord, of moderation; happy in the power of consecrating, from henceforth, all their efforts to the protection of the arts of peace, to the increase of the internal prosperity of their states, and to the awakening of those sentiments of religion and morality, whose empire had been but too much enfeebled by the misfortunes of the times. Long before this the several divisions of the army of occupation were on their march, each to its own country. The time fixed for the evacuation had been anticipated by about a month, and the troops had been reviewed for the last time by the Duke of Wellington, at Sedan, before the end of October, in the presence of the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia, who then paid a flying visit to Louis XVIII. at Paris. The duke took leave of the troops, which he had

commanded for three years, in an order of the day dated from the head-quarters at Cambray on the 7th of November, in which he expressed his gratitude for the good conduct which had distinguished them during the time they had been under his orders, and the regret with which he had seen the moment arrive which was to put an end to his public connection and private relations with the officers; and begged the generals commanding-in-chief to receive and make known to the men under their orders the assurance that he should never cease to take the most lively interest in everything that might concern them; and that the remembrance of the three years during which he had had the honour to be at their head would be always dear to him. Our illustrious countryman was made during the congress a field-marshal in the Austrian, Russian, and Prussian services, and also a Grand Cordon or Knight of the First Class of the French Order of the Holy Ghost. Even in matters of ceremonial the great captain almost took rank with the crowned heads; and in real importance and personal ascendency he was the first figure there. After his return to England his grace was appointed, in the end of December, Master-general of the Ordnance, with a seat in the cabinet.

The economical condition of the country still continued at the close of the year to present much the same superficial appearance which it had done for some time preceding; but the elastic spirit which had existed a twelvemonth ago had long been palpably on the decay, and was now quite gone. The harvest had turned out, upon the whole, better than had been expected. Oats, barley, beans, and peas, indeed, proved very unproductive; but the wheat crop was of average quantity. Grass, turnips, and potatoes, which had all been almost given up, made a sudden recovery in the first week of September, when some rain at last fell after the long drought. The consequence was, that, although the prices of all other kinds of agricultural produce used as human food rose, and were much higher at the end of this year than they had been at the end of the last, wheat had considerably fallen in price. Oats, for instance, which had been at 45*s.* 11*d.* the quarter in December 1817, were now at 63*s.* 6*d.*; but wheat, which

had been then at 85*s.* 4*d.*, had now declined to 78*s.* 10*d.* Still this might be considered as a scarcity price. Nor had the prices of the other commodities of which speculation had brought in the largest supplies yet much given way. 'It is well known,' as Mr. Tooke observes, 'that the resistance to a change, whether from a low to a high, or from a high to a low range of prices, is at first very considerable, and that there is generally a pause of greater or less duration before the turn becomes manifest; in the interval, while sales are difficult or impracticable, unless at a difference in price, which the buyer in the one case, and the seller in the other, are not yet prepared to submit to, the quotations are regulated by the last transactions, but are said to be, and are in fact, nominal. A struggle of this kind prevailed more or less, according as the articles were in greater or less abundance through the autumn, and into the winter of 1818–19, when many articles which had become unsaleable from excess were still quoted at nearly as high prices as they had attained at any time in 1818.' But the excessive importation, which had not yet much brought down prices, was already bringing down many of the importers and those connected with them; and the year closed in the midst of numerous and extensive bankruptcies.

The reform spirit, too, was spreading and rising again among the people, as they began to feel the pressure of the commercial stagnation in diminished employment, and a tendency to decline in wages. But, as has been already stated, meetings for reform had continued to be held from the commencement of the year, both in the metropolis and in the manufacturing districts. One which was held—in the latter part of the year, as we gather—at Birch, near Middleton, where he lived, is noted by Bamford for the following incident: 'It was moved and seconded that petitions to the Lords and Commons should be presented in the usual manner; when William Benbow, who had lately returned from prison, made his way through the crowd, and, mounting the waggon, urged the people, in a violent and irrational address, to march to London, and "present their petitions at the point of the sword and pike." He was loudly cheered, with expressions such as:

"Ay, that's the way"—"Go on, Benbow"—"That's the man for us." At that same time he was pondering on a retreat from the country; that country which he was endeavouring to distract by a course of violence. That very week, or the week following, he sailed from Liverpool to join Cobbett in America. When I afterwards met some of his applauders, and asked them what they thought of the man who could urge them to rush on destruction, and then hasten out of the way, they shook with indignation.' This may show that all the violent counsels which were addressed to the people did not proceed from the government spies; some of their leaders were, no doubt, the advisers of as extreme and insane courses as any recommended by Castles or Oliver.

Another meeting at Lydgate, in Saddleworth, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, which appears to have taken place earlier in the year, is remarkable for the introduction of an innovation, of which Bamford was himself the originator. In a speech which he made, he proposed that his female auditors should take part with the men in the show of hands when the resolution was put to the vote, vindicating their claim to be allowed to do so on grounds both of right and expediency. 'This,' says he, 'was a new idea; and the women, who attended numerously on that bleak ridge, were mightily pleased with it; and the men being nothing dissentient, when the resolution was put, the women held up their hands, amid much laughter; and ever from that time females voted with the men at the radical meetings.' He adds, that the new impulse thus given to the radical movement was not only soon after copied at meetings for charitable and religious purposes, but was ere long carried much beyond what had been at first contemplated, and brought about the formation of female political unions, with their committee-women, chairwomen, and other officials. Bamford, we suppose from all this, would have had the franchise extended to women. In curious contrast to his radicalism, here is the following passage which we find in one of Cobbett's *Registers* of almost this very date; it occurs in a letter to Major Cartwright, written from the United States in September, principally in abuse of the toasts and

speeches at Sir Francis Burdett's election dinner: 'Another curious thing took place at this dinner—the toast of "Jeremy Bentham, Esq., the unanswerable advocate of the rights of the people." I wonder who the baronet and his Rump will find out next! what unknown creature they will bring forth! There is no danger, you see, from Mr. Bentham; no danger that he will become the rival, or foil, of the baronet. It is safe to toast and praise *him*. Little care is taken to preserve consistency; for Mr. Bentham, if he can, with his quaint and unintelligible language and mode of stating and of reasoning, be called the advocate of anything, is the advocate of universal suffrage,* which he would extend even to women, *and which, by such extension, he would, if he were attended to, render ridiculous.*' And then Bentham, his speculations, and his admirers, are kicked out of the way in the most summary and contemptuous style: 'There is one thing which makes Mr. Bentham a favourite with this little band of feeble and ambitious men; indeed there are two things: he cannot be a rival; and he would, if he could, hurt Mr. Hunt and me. He shows his teeth, but he has not dared to bite. He would have done it, if he had dared. But, indeed, he ran no risk: for very few, comparatively speaking, buy his book; and those who do, never read it half through. It is a *corvée* to read it. It is not only bombast, but quaint bombast, and puzzling and tedious beyond mortal endurance. . . . The book is wholly inefficient. . . . A very fit and proper person this to be toasted by the baronet and his Rump.'

* At this time Burdett had given up *universal suffrage* for what he called *general suffrage*.

CHAPTER XV.

State of the Country—Opening of Parliament—Care of the King's Person—Resumption of Cash-payments—Financial Measures—Prorogation.

THE series of bankruptcies which had commenced in the latter part of the year 1818, continued throughout the first months of 1819. 'The largest,' says the historian of prices, 'in point of amount of the articles of which there was so great an excess of the importation, was cotton; and it was in this article that the fall in price was the greatest, and the failures among those concerned in it, consequently the most extensive. The error usual on such occasions had been committed; the stocks on the spot had been, as we have seen, greatly reduced in 1816, and a rise of price of this reduced stock was perfectly justified; but then, as in more recent instances, the advanced price was not confined to the small stocks on the spot, but was paid for large quantities in the countries of growth, to be shipped hither.' The result, he goes on to state, was, that 'importers, speculators, and manufacturers were successively ruined by having embarked too largely upon the anticipation of the maintenance of the former range of high prices. There were also very extensive failures in New York, but more especially in Charleston, and other southern ports of the United States, at the close of 1818, and at the commencement of 1819.' This state of commercial pressure and distress could not but make itself be felt to some extent by the manufacturing population. It may not have gone the length of throwing any considerable number of them out of employment; but it could not fail to affect the labour-market, and to reduce still further the rate of wages, already inadequate to counterbalance the continued high price of provisions.

The large importations and eager speculation which had gone on for the greater part of the past year, however, had had the effect of swelling the revenue, and giving a

semblance of extraordinary prosperity to the national finances. This circumstance, which had the advantage of admitting of distinct and palpable exhibition in figures, enabled ministers to meet the new parliament with much complacency.

The Houses assembled on the 14th of January, but the first week was consumed in swearing the members of the House of Commons, and in the re-election of Mr. Manners Sutton to the chair of that House, in which he was replaced by acclamation. The session was opened by commission on the 21st, when the regent's speech was read by the lord chancellor. In noticing the death of the queen, it directed the attention of the legislature to the consideration of such measures as that event had rendered necessary for the care of his majesty's person. It then mentioned the late negotiations at Aix-la-Chapelle, and announced that a treaty had been concluded with the United States for the renewal, for a further term of years, of the commercial convention subsisting between the two nations, and for the amicable adjustment of several points of mutual importance to the interests of both countries. An assurance was expressed that, when the estimates for the current year should be laid before the Commons, they would learn with satisfaction the extent of reduction which the present situation of Europe, and the circumstances of the British empire, had allowed to be made in our naval and military establishments. At the same time they were informed that a considerable and progressive improvement would be found to have taken place in the most important branches of the revenue. The military operations of the Marquis of Hastings against the Pindarrees in the East Indies, the news of the successful completion of which had been received since parliament last rose, were dwelt upon with merited congratulation and eulogy. Lastly, his royal highness declared that he had the greatest pleasure in informing parliament that the trade, commerce, and manufactures of the country were in a most flourishing condition; and he observed that the favourable change which had so rapidly taken place in the internal circumstances of the United Kingdom afforded the strongest proof of the solidity of its resources.

The address was voted in both Houses without any amendment being moved, and after little debate. The first question that tried the temper of the new parliament was that of the new arrangements to be made for the care of the person of his majesty, in consequence of the death of the queen. On the 25th of January a bill was introduced in the Lords by Lord Liverpool, appointing the Duke of York as the successor to her majesty. Some objections were made by the opposition to the amount of patronage to be vested in his royal highness; but no resistance of moment was offered to this bill in either House. Another by which it was followed—the Royal Household or Windsor Establishment Bill—had not so smooth a passage. This measure was heralded by a message from the regent, brought down on the 4th of February, acquainting parliament that his royal highness placed at its disposal the £58,000 per annum which had, by the demise of her majesty, become disposable by him for the general purposes of the civil list; only recommending the claims of certain members of her majesty's late establishment to the justice and liberality of the House of Commons. On the same day Lord Castlereagh, after a speech in explanation of the intentions of the government, moved and obtained the appointment of a select committee to take into consideration the whole subject of this £58,000, and of another sum of £100,000, which had been appropriated to the maintenance of the establishment at Windsor, and the distribution of which also it was now thought necessary or expedient to modify. It was agreed that, after the select committee had made its report, the subject should be taken up and further considered by a committee of the whole House. Meanwhile it was intimated that ministers would propose the assignment of £25,000 of the income of the late queen to be bestowed in annuities upon her majesty's servants; and the reduction of the yearly expense of the Windsor establishment to £50,000. The entire immediate saving, therefore, would be £83,000, which would ultimately become £108,000, when all the annuities should have fallen in. But there was, besides, a sum of £10,000, which the queen had enjoyed as *custos* of his majesty's person; it was intended that the same salary should be continued to

the Duke of York. This was the clause of the ministerial scheme which it was well known would prove of most difficult digestion with parliament. Accordingly, on the 22nd, when the Commons resolved themselves into a committee of the whole House on the report of the select committee, it was about the duke's salary that the battle was chiefly waged. When the new arrangements were first proposed, Tierney had objected in strong terms to the £50,000 allowed for the Windsor establishment. He could not conceive, he said, how this sum was to be expended. 'Fifty thousand pounds for the establishment at Windsor, for the support of his majesty in his present unhappy state! To whom, and for what particular use connected with the due and dignified support of the king, was this sum to be given? His majesty, it was too well known, was incapable of even ordinary enjoyments. He could not, if he were rightly informed, speak or be spoken to; and indeed the necessary measures which were taken for the preservation of his health, and, if possible, the cure of his malady, rendered such a seclusion from conversation absolutely essential. His regimen was, from the same cause, so very plain, that the tenth of £50,000 would be more than sufficient to supply it, with all the necessary forms of attendance.' Upon this head, however, the right honourable gentleman, who had been a member of the select committee, had seen reason to alter his opinion. He now confirmed Castlereagh's statement, that the report of the committee, which, in regard to the Windsor establishment, and the allowances to her late majesty's servants, coincided with the recommendations of the government, had been agreed to with perfect unanimity. He had thought the £50,000 too great; but when he had heard it stated in the committee, by competent witnesses, that, even if it were not to be inhabited by his majesty, the necessary charge of maintaining Windsor Castle would amount to eighteen or twenty thousand a year, he could not think that the remaining £30,000 was too much for the royal establishment. Passing lightly over everything else, he now directed the main force of his argument upon the question—the great constitutional question, as he called it—out of what fund the

guardian of the king's person was to be remunerated? Castlereagh, in the speech with which he opened the debate, had used strong language. He had said that, if the proposition which it was understood was to be brought forward from the other side of the House should be carried, it would, he believed in his conscience, consign the names of the members of the new parliament to infamy in the estimation of the country. Undismayed by this menace, Tierney moved his amendment to the effect that the expense attending the care of his majesty's person should be defrayed out of the privy purse or the other private funds of the crown. Let the country, he said, look at the various sums which had been voted to the royal family since 1811. The prince-regent besides £50,000 a year set apart for the payment of his debts, had then a privy purse of £60,000 a year, to which an addition of £10,000 a year had since been made. The king had also a privy purse of £60,000 a year, with an additional revenue from the Duchy of Lancaster of more than £10,000. There was thus a private property belonging to the crown of £140,000 a year; and surely it was not too much to say that out of this large sum should be defrayed the expense of taking care of the king's person. The task of answering Tierney's speech was undertaken by Mr. Peel, at this time secretary for Ireland. He relied principally upon the determination expressed by the Duke of York to accept of no salary which should come from the privy purse, and upon the sacredness and inviolability which had hitherto been held to attach to that fund. When he mentioned Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Adam (now become lord chief-commissioner of the Scotch Jury Court) as two eminent Whig authorities who had been accustomed to preach this doctrine about the privy purse in its highest strain, the House, or at least the opposition, testified by loud derisive cheers how it was disposed to account for the high monarchic principles on this point entertained or professed by these personal friends of the Prince of Wales. Mr. Peel, however, dexterously chose to understand the manifestation in a somewhat different sense. 'If,' he exclaimed, 'what I have heard from the other side be meant as a cheer of derision at the name of Mr. Sheridan, I must say that I

could not expect such an expression towards an individual who was one of the most able supporters the party from which it proceeded ever had the honour to possess, while he was, by universal confession, one of the greatest ornaments of whom that House and the British empire ever had reason to be proud.' The rest of the debate on the same side was principally sustained by other members of the government, by Mr. Huskisson, who held the office of chief-commissioner of woods and forests, and by Sir Samuel Shepherd and Sir Robert Gifford, the attorney and solicitor-general; the amendment was supported by a crowd of speakers, among whom the most conspicuous was Mr. Scarlett (the late Lord Abinger). Some of the more ardent of the opposition orators seem to have expected that their logic and rhetoric would prove triumphant that night over all the influences of power; but, when the vote was at last taken, the numbers were found to be 281 for ministers against 186, so that Tierney's proposition was negatived by a majority of 95. Wilberforce, who voted with the opposition, describes this as the best debate he had witnessed for a long time. 'Castlereagh, Tierney, Peel, Bankes, Solicitor-general, Scarlett,' he says, 'all did well.' And he adds: 'I had really the plan of a good and very telling speech, from its taking up some of Peel's points, but, partly from my distress about Castlereagh, I came away without speaking.' He was afraid that he had pained Castlereagh by some expressions in a speech a few days before. Another animated debate, distinguished by the mingled eloquence of Denman, Canning, and Brougham, took place on the 25th, when the resolution for giving the Duke of York the £10,000 a year was reported from the committee, and was carried by the still larger majority of 247 to 137. The discussion in the Lords was taken in committee, when Lord Grey in a long speech proposed the omission of the clause in the bill relating to the duke's salary; he was supported by Lord Lansdowne and other peers; but the amendment was not pressed to a division.

The most important legislative act of the session was the arrangement made for the resumption of cash-payments by the bank. This question, in its various branches, gave

rise to about fifty debates and conversations in the two Houses, the reports of which cover between four and five hundred long columns in Hansard; we can only rapidly indicate the course and the results of the discussion. Very soon after parliament met, secret committees were, on the motion of ministers, appointed in both Houses to inquire into the state of the bank. Lists, of course, were, as usual, supplied to their adherents by the government, and the ballot, accordingly, returned a large preponderance of ministerial members for each committee; it appears, indeed, that, in the Commons, the opposition declined taking any part in the process of nomination; nevertheless, a few days afterwards, Mr. Calcraft moved that the name of Mr. Brougham should be added to the committee, and when a division took place, after a short debate, the motion was supported by the large minority of 133 votes against 175—a result which, we are told, was received by the opposition with a loud cheer. It was asserted in the course of the debate that of the twenty-one members of the committee, as appointed by the ballot, fourteen were ministerialists. In the beginning of April both committees presented short reports, recommending that, in order to facilitate the final and complete restoration of cash-payments, a bill should be forthwith passed, prohibiting the continuance of the payment in gold by the bank of its notes issued previous to the 1st of January, 1817, according to its public notices of that and the preceding year. It appears that between six and seven millions in gold had already been paid by the bank in the fulfilment of these voluntary engagements. 'The issue of that treasure,' Mr. Peel observed in moving for leave to bring in the bill, 'had not been attended with any good to the nation;' and he thought, indeed, it might have been foreseen, that, unless this issue had been accompanied by a simultaneous reduction of the number of bank-notes, the gold would find its way to those places where there was a greater demand for it. There was little doubt at present as to the place of its destination; for, by a report of the minister of finance in France, it appeared that, within the first six months of the last year, 125,000,000 francs had been coined at the French mint, three-fourths of which, it was under-

stood, had been derived from the gold coin of this realm. The opposition expressed some dissatisfaction; but the proposed bill was immediately brought in, and passed with all possible expedition through both Houses. It prohibited the continuance of the cash-payments under the notices till the end of the current session. Much more elaborate reports, embracing the whole extent of the subject, were presented by the two committees about a month later. These expositions represented the condition of the bank as eminently flourishing. Its liabilities, it was stated, amounted, on the 30th of January, 1819, to £33,894,580, and its assets in government securities and other credits to £39,096,900, exclusive of the permanent debt of £14,686,800 due from the government, and repayable on the expiration of the charter. The entire surplus in favour of the bank, therefore, was £19,899,120; and what might be called its immediate available surplus, £5,202,320. The bullion in its coffers also, which had been very much reduced at the close of the war, had gone on increasing from July 1815 to October 1817, at which date it was much greater than it had ever before been since the establishment of the bank, although it had again been brought down by the payments that had since taken place. The committees, under the direction of the government, which was so influentially represented in each, agreed in recommending a plan for the resumption of cash-payments, which was first embodied in a series of resolutions, and in that form submitted to the two Houses. It was founded upon the principle first announced by Mr. Ricardo in 1816, in his *Proposals for an Economical and Secure Currency*, that the bank should be bound to exchange its notes, not for coin, but for gold ingots, the fineness of which should be attested by a stamp, and only in quantities above a certain weight, at a rate to be diminished from time to time until it should have descended to the Mint price of £3 17*s.* 10½*d.* per ounce. But, although this principle was adopted as the basis of the plan, the complete exchangeability of bank-notes for cash was provided for as its ultimate result. The resolutions were first moved in the Lords on the 21st of May, by Lord Harrowby, the president of the council, who had officiated as chairman of

their lordship's committee. A series of counter-resolutions moved by Lord Lauderdale, although they met with no support, even from his own side of the House, gave occasion to a debate, which was principally sustained by his lordship, and Lords Liverpool and Grenville; the government plan received the approbation, not only of Grenville, but also of Lords King and Lansdowne; Lauderdale's resolutions were negatived without a division, and those moved by Lord Harrowby were agreed to. The subject was much more fully discussed in the Commons, where the ministerial resolutions were proposed on the 24th, by Mr. Peel, in an elaborate and remarkable speech. Mr. Peel had been the chairman of the secret committee; the report of the committee was probably of his drawing up, and the government plan was understood to have been arranged and put together by him; but not only was he not the originator of its leading principle; it would appear from his own satement that neither he himself nor the government had been prepared for the adoption of such a plan when the committee was appointed and the subject was first brought forward. He began his speech by frankly announcing that, in consequence of the evidence which had been received by the committee, and the divisions which had arisen upon it, his opinions had undergone a very material change. 'He was ready to avow, without shame or remorse, that he went into the committee with a very different opinion from that which he at present entertained; for his views of the subject were most materially different when he voted against the resolutions brought forward in 1811 by Mr. Horner, as the chairman of the bullion committee. Having gone into the inquiry, determined to dismiss all former impressions that he might have received, and to obliterate from his memory the vote which he had given some years since when the same question was discussed, he had resolved to apply to it his undivided and unprejudiced attention, and adopt every inference that authentic information or mature reflection should offer to his mind; and he had no hesitation it stating that, although he should probably even now vote, if it were again brought before the House, in opposition to the practical measure then recommended

[the resumption of cash-payments by the bank after two years], he now, with very little modification, concurred in the principles laid down in the first fourteen resolutions submitted to the House by that very able and much-lamented individual. He conceived them to represent the true nature and laws of our monetary system.' In the conclusion of his speech he adverted to another personal matter. Among other difficulties, he observed, which presented themelves to him in the discussion of this question, was one which gave him great pain; 'and that was the necessity he felt of opposing himself to an authority [that of his father, Sir Robert Peel], to which he always had bowed, and he hoped always should bow, with deference; but here he had a great public duty imposed upon him, and from that duty he would not shrink, whatever might be his private feelings.' Thus, in the first of the three great measures with which his name is associated, as well as in the other two, Catholic emancipation and the repeal of the corn-laws, it was the fate of this distinguished statesman to surprise the public by suddenly appearing as the chief figure in what we may call the triumph of the principles which up to that moment he had spent his life in opposing. Various modifications of the government plan in some particulars were proposed by Mr. Edward Ellis, Mr. Cripps, and other members, and the debate was kept up for two evenings; but the original resolutions were in the end agreed to without a division. Although opposed by Tierney, they were supported not only by Ricardo, who had been returned to this parliament for the Irish borough of Portarlington, and who, although not appointed to sit on the secret committee, had been examined before it at great length, but by Sir Henry Parnell, Mr. Abercromby (the present Lord Dunfermline), and other members of the opposition. The resolutions, as reported by the committee of the whole House, were to the following effect: That it was expedient that the restriction on payments in cash by the bank should be continued beyond the time fixed by law, the 5th of July, 1819; that a definite period should be fixed for the termination of the restriction, and that in the meantime certain preparatory measures should be

taken; that provision should be made for the gradual repayment to the bank of £10,000,000 of its advances for the public service; that from the 1st of February, 1820, the bank should be obliged to give in exchange for its notes gold, assayed and stamped, in quantities of not less than sixty ounces, at the rate of 81*s.* per ounce; that from the 1st of October, 1820, it should be obliged to pay gold for its notes in the same manner, at the rate of 79*s.* 6*d.* per ounce; that after the 1st of May, 1821, the rate should be 77*s.* 10½*d.* per ounce; that from the 1st of May, 1823, the bank should pay its notes on demand in the legal coin of the realm; and that the laws prohibiting the melting and exportation of the coin should be repealed. Bills embodying these resolutions were afterwards brought in by Mr. Peel and the chancellor of the exchequer, and encountered scarcely any opposition in their passage through either House. The only alteration of any importance made in the original arrangement was the substitution of the 1st of May, 1822 for the 1st of May, 1821, as the date at which the bank should be obliged to begin paying gold for its notes at the Mint price. This amendment was introduced in the Lords, on the motion of Lord Harrowby, and was agreed to by the Commons. The bank, however, we may here mention, did not avail itself either of this postponement, or even of the liberty to refuse payment in gold of any demands under £233 12*s.* 6*d.* —the value of sixty ounces—but on the 1st of May, 1821, commenced giving cash in exchange for its notes of whatever amount.

A few days after the secret committees on the bank had been nominated, Lord Castlereagh, in the Commons, proposed the appointment of a select committee for inquiring into the national income and expenditure, to consist of the same twenty-one members who had formed the finance committee of the last parliament, except that two new names were substituted for those of Sir Thomas Acland, and Mr. J. P. Grant, who were not now in the House. In the speech with which he prefaced his motion, Castlereagh went into almost as much detail as if he had been opening the budget, and a debate was brought on; but no objection was made to the appointment of the committee. The

committee presented an elaborate report in the beginning of April; and on the 3rd of June, in a committee of the whole House, the chancellor of the exchequer laid on the table a series of resolutions founded on this report, and presenting an outline of the proposed financial arrangements for the year. They began by affirming that the reduction of taxation since 1815 had been upwards of £18,000,000 per annum, and that, when the revenues of Great Britain and Ireland had been consolidated in 1816, the mere interest upon the debt of Ireland, including the sinking fund applicable to its reduction, had exceeded the entire net revenue of that country by nearly £1,900,000, 'without affording any provision for the civil list, and other permanent charges, or for the proportion of supplies to be defrayed by that part of the United Kingdom;' it was then stated that the supplies required to be voted for the present year would be £20,500,000; that the portion of such supplies which might be provided by the continuance of the existing revenue could not be estimated at more than £7,000,000, leaving the sum of £13,500,000 to be raised by loan or other extraordinary resource; that the sinking fund might be estimated at £15,500,000, exceeding the sum necessary to be raised for the service of the year by about £2,000,000 only; and the concluding resolution was as follows: 'That, to provide for the exigencies of the public service, to make such progressive reduction of the national debt as may adequately support public credit, and to afford to the country a prospect of future relief from a part of its present burdens, it is absolutely necessary that there should be a clear surplus of the income of the country, beyond the expenditure, of not less than £5,000,000; and that, with a view to the attainment of this important object, it is expedient now to increase the income of the country by the imposition of taxes to the amount of £3,000,000 per annum.' The debate on these resolutions was taken on the 7th, when the additional taxation was strongly opposed, and the previous question was moved as an amendment on that part of the ministerial scheme; but on a division the resolutions were carried by a majority of 329 against 132. The new taxes, it was now announced, would be raised on malt,

tobacco, coffee, and cocoa, tea, British spirits, pepper, and foreign wool. The budget was opened by Mr. Vansittart on the 9th, when several more divisions took place, but all the ministerial propositions were carried by large majorities. The supplies voted in the course of the session were: for the army, £8,900,000; for the navy, £6,436,000; for the ordnance, £1,191,000; miscellaneous, £1,950,000; interest and sinking fund on exchequer bills, £2,000,000; repayment of advances from the bank, £5,000,000; reduction of other unfunded debt, £5,597,000; making in all £31,074,000, exclusive of the interest upon the funded debt, and of the sinking fund, which together amounted to nearly £45,000,000 more, and were provided for by permanent taxes. Of the £31,074,000, it was calculated that the annual malt-tax (£3,000,000), the annual or temporary excise duties continued (£3,500,000), a lottery (yielding £240,000), and the sale of old stores, would produce £7,074,000; the remaining £24,000,000 was to be provided for by two loans of £12,000,000 each, the one derived from the sinking fund, the other raised by contract. The effect of the first of these borrowing operations would simply be to reduce the sinking fund for the present year to £3,500,000; that of the other, taken in conjunction with the repayment of the bank advances, and of the remaining unfunded debt that was to be paid off, would be—disregarding the speculative advantages that might accrue either to the government or the subscribers from the terms of the loan—to add £1,403,000 to the amount of the entire debt. On the whole, therefore, the debt would be reduced by these operations to the extent of somewhat more than £2,000,000; and with the aid of the new taxes, the reduction might be expected to be above £5,000,000. Nominally, however, the new stock created for the two loans of £24,000,000 was £32,304,000. We may notice under the present head a motion made by Mr. Tierney on the 18th of May, that the House would resolve itself into a committee of the whole House to take into consideration the state of the nation, which, after producing one of the longest debates of the session, was negatived by a majority of more than two to one (357 against 178); and a series of forty-seven resolutions in favour of retrenchment, which

were moved by Sir Henry Parnell on the 1st of July, and which were disposed of, after a very short debate, on the 12th, by the further consideration of them being adjourned till that day three months.

Not much more of the legislation of the session was of any historic importance. Mr. Sturges Bourne obtained the appointment of a new committee on the poor-laws; and his bill for the general amendment of these laws, which had been lost in the last session, was revived and passed. An act was also passed to amend the laws respecting the settlement of the poor so far as regards renting tenements. But a more comprehensive measure, the object of which was to amend the law of settlement generally, was lost in the Commons; as was another, to prevent the misapplication of the rates, on the second reading in the Lords. A bill was passed for the regulation of cotton-factories, and the better preservation of the health of young persons employed in them by limiting the hours of labour. An extension of the Charitable Foundations Act of the last session was proposed and carried through the two Houses under the auspices of the government; the motion for leave to bring in the bill was made by Lord Castlereagh and seconded by Mr. Brougham. It was nearly the same with the bill of last session, as originally introduced and as passed by the Commons, embracing charitable foundations of all descriptions, as well as those connected with the education of the poor. Not only charities supported by private subscription, however, but all institutions having special visitors, were excepted; and when Mr. Brougham moved the omission of the latter exemption, the amendment was negatived by a majority of 107 against 75. Early in the session, petitions complaining of the state of the criminal law were presented to both Houses from the common-council of the city of London; and on the 2nd of March, Sir James Mackintosh, stepping into the space left vacant by the lamented Romilly, moved, in an elaborate address, that a select committee should be appointed to consider of so much of that law as related to capital punishments in felonies. The motion was opposed by ministers; but after a debate of some length, it was carried by a majority of 147 against

128—a result which was received with repeated cheers. A report from the committee thus appointed was presented on the 6th of July; and after another eloquent speech from Mackintosh, was ordered to be printed. Committees were also appointed in both Houses, on the proposition of the government, to inquire into the state of jails and other places of confinement, 'and into the best method of providing for the reformation, as well as the safe custody and punishment, of offenders.' A report, it may be also mentioned, from the commissioners appointed the preceding year for inquiring into the means of preventing the forgery of bank-notes, was presented by command of the prince-regent as soon as parliament met. But the only reforms of the criminal law of any importance that were enacted during the present session were the repeal of certain Scotch statutes, according to which a person sending or bearing a challenge to fight a duel forfeited all his movable property, and suffered banishment, whether the duel took place or not; and the abolition of the old and barbarous right of trial by battle, and of appeals of murder, felony, or mayhem. The latter innovation, however, suggested by a case in which an appeal of murder had taken place in the preceding year, and the trial by, or wager of, battle had been demanded by the appellee, was not effected without some opposition. Nobody stood up for the trial by battle either in appeals or in writs of right, but it was maintained that the appeal of murder was a great constitutional right which ought not to be taken away. The common-council of the city of London petitioned that parliament would not deprive the people of their ancient and undoubted right of appeal in criminal cases; but an amendment, moved by Sir Francis Burdett, with a view of attaining the object of this prayer, was, on a division in the Commons, supported only by four votes against eighty-six. Nor was another attempt, made at a subsequent stage to preserve the appeal by Sir Robert Wilson, more successful. Another ministerial measure was much more obstinately and vigorously resisted—what was called the Foreign Enlistment Bill. Even on the motion of the attorney-general for leave to bring in the bill, the gallery was cleared for a division, though none

took place. The second reading was only carried by the narrow majority of 155 votes against 142. Another debate arose on the motion for going into committee, which was made memorable by declamations of extraordinary eloquence from Mackintosh on the one side, and Canning on the other. The third reading gave rise to another animated discussion, followed by a division, in which the numbers were—ayes, 190; noes, 129. In the Lords, also, the bill encountered the keenest opposition; an amendment, moved on the question of its committal, was, after a debate of some length, supported by 47 votes against 100. The object of the act was sufficiently declared by its title, which was: 'To prevent the enlisting or engagement of his majesty's subjects to serve in foreign service, and the fitting-out or equipping in his majesty's dominions vessels for warlike purposes, without his majesty's licence.' The main ground of objection to it was its bearing upon the contest which Spain was still carrying on in South America; great numbers of Englishmen were now in the service of the several states there which had declared or made good their independence; and the present measure was looked upon as being in effect and substantially a blow aimed at those young communities yet struggling to achieve or to complete their emancipation, and a quite uncalled-for helping-hand held out to their old oppressor in its vain attempt to crush them. Finally, among the acts passed this session were, one to carry into effect a treaty recently concluded with the Netherlands for the suppression of the slave-trade, another to amend the act of the last session for carrying into execution the convention with Portugal on the same subject, and another to carry into effect certain commercial arrangements which had been made with Portugal and with the United States.

On the 1st of July, within a few days of the end of the session, Sir Francis Burdett, for the eighteenth time, made his annual motion on the question of parliamentary reform. All that he now proposed, however, was, that the House should pledge itself to take the state of the representation into its most serious consideration early in the next session of parliament. The motion was seconded by Mr. George

Lamb (younger brother of the late Lord Melbourne);* but neither he nor any other speaker who supported it professed to go along with the mover in the peculiar kind of reform which he advocated. Next to Sir Francis's own long and rambling oration, the most prominent speech of the evening was one delivered by Alderman Waithman. Some of the opinions that were expressed in various quarters are curious enough when read by the light of subsequent events. All the length, for instance, that Mr. Hume went on this occasion was to observe that the majority of the people of Scotland were favourable to a moderate reform, and that he should vote for the motion in compliance with the opinion of his constituents. Lord John Russell, again, though admitting the propriety of disfranchising such boroughs as were notoriously corrupt, and of restricting the duration of parliament to three years, could not support a motion 'that went the length of proposing an inquiry into the general state of the representation, because such an inquiry was calculated to throw a slur upon the representation of the country, and to fill the minds of the people with vague and indefinite alarms.' On the division, however, 58 members voted with Sir Francis, against 153. More success attended Lord Archibald Hamilton's efforts in the cause of Scotch burgh-reform. This question formed the subject of two of the most exciting contests of the session. The election of magistrates for the burgh of Aberdeen, in 1817, had been declared illegal by the Court of Session, in the same manner as the Montrose election of the year preceding had been; but in this case the crown, when applied to for a warrant to enable a new election to take place—the burgh had not been found to be disfranchised, as Montrose was—had granted one to the old magistrates to elect their successors as usual, in the face of a petition numerously signed

* Mr. Lamb has been returned for Westminster on the vacancy occasioned by the death of Sir Samuel Romilly, after a contest which lasted from the 13th of February till the 3rd of March, and which was distinguished throughout by the most violent proceedings on the part of the mob. His (then radical) opponent was the present Sir (then Mr.) J. C. Hobhouse; and the numbers at the close of the poll were—for Lamb, 4465; for Hobhouse, 3861; 38 votes were also given for Major Cartwright.

from the burgesses, that, as it seems had been usual in similar circumstances, the election should be by poll of the burgesses generally. Lord Archibald, on the 1st of April, moved an address to the prince-regent for a copy of this warrant; the motion was strenuously resisted by ministers, through their organ the lord advocate; but the vote, announced amid the cheers of the minority, was not a triumphant one for the learned lord, his majority being only one of five in a House of two hundred and fifteen members. This was a victory ominous of coming defeat. On the 6th of May, Lord Archibald brought forward the general question by moving that a great number of petitions, which had been presented in the course of the session from the Scotch royal burghs, should be referred to a select committee. Of the sixty-six royal burghs, thirty-nine, containing a population of above 420,000 souls, had by this time voted resolutions in favour of reform; while of the remaining twenty-seven small burghs, the population amounted altogether to only about 60,000. The preponderance of opinion in Scotland on the side of burgh-reform might therefore be taken to be as seven to one among the persons most interested in the matter, and most competent to form a judgment upon it. Lord Archibald's present motion was opposed almost exclusively on the ground of the alleged connection of burgh with parliamentary reform; but it was carried on a division, in a considerably fuller House, by the same majority by which his former one had been defeated, the numbers being—ayes, 149; noes, 144. Before the session terminated, a report was presented from the committee, in which they declared that the general allegations of the petitioners appeared to be borne out by the evidence. Another question on which the struggle of party in the House of Commons was equally close or doubtful, was that of Catholic emancipation. It was brought forward on the 3rd of May, in the Commons, by Grattan, in the shape of a motion that the state of the laws by which oaths were required to be taken, or declarations made, as qualifications for the enjoyment of offices and the exercise of civil functions, so far as they affected Roman Catholics, should be immediately taken into consideration in a committee of

the whole House. It was the last time that the great Irish patriot's eloquent voice was destined to be heard on that theme—almost the last time, indeed, that h was to take part in any parliamentary discussion; the debate that followed his opening speech was cut short by the clamour of the House for the vote, before either Canning, Plunket, or any other of the more eminent speakers on either side had risen; several members were shut out from the unexpected division; but the numbers, as ultimately settled, were 241 for the motion, and 243 against it. A fortnight later, a similar motion was made in the Lords by Lord Donoughmore, and was negatived, after a long debate, by a majority of 147 against 106.

Parliament was prorogued, on the 13th of July, by the prince-regent in person. His royal highness spoke of attempts which had recently been made in some of the manufacturing districts to take advantage of circumstances of local distress to excite a spirit of disaffection, and urged the members of the legislature, on their return to their several counties, to use their utmost endeavours, in co-operation with the magistracy, to defeat the machinations of those who, under the pretence of reform, had in reality no other object but the subversion of the constitution. The origin, course, and issue of the state of things which had thus begun to darken the political horizon will now demand our attention.

CHAPTER XVI.

Condition of the Government—Continuance of Reform Agitation—Condition of the People—Novelties in the Reform Movement—Drilling—Manchester Meeting.

THE first session of the new parliament had not strengthened the ministry either with the country or even in their own estimation. 'The ministry,' Mr. Ward writes in the beginning of June, 'is in a strange state. The majority of the House of Commons seems equally determined upon

two points; first, that it shall always stumble; second, that it shall not fall. The result of the great battle that was fought upon Tierney's motion [for a committee on the state of the nation, on the 18th of May, when ministers had a majority of more than two to one] seemed to promise more strength, but Thursday night [the 3rd of June, when the second reading of the Foreign Enlistment Bill was only carried by a majority of thirteen] was a complete relapse into languid support and negligent attendance. You may judge what opinion is formed by persons whose trade it is to understand such matters, of the honesty and firmness of the present parliament, when I tell you that the dinner which the prince gives to-day to some opposition lords, was gravely assigned by the secretary of the treasury as a reason for the bad division to which I have just alluded upon the Enlistment Bill.' The defect would seem, from this account, to have been rather one of discipline than of honesty; incidental, perhaps, in any circumstances to a first session, and in a higher degree to a parliament having so precarious a tenure of existence as the present. It would appear, however, from disclosures which have recently been made, that at one time in the course of the session ministers had seriously contemplated a resignation, and that in consequence not merely of the unmanageableness of the House of Commons, but also of differences of opinion among themselves. We have seen that when they met parliament, they had not made up their minds upon any particular plan for settling the important and pressing question of the resumption of cash-payments by the bank. Mr. Peel stated distinctly, in proposing the arrangement which was actually adopted, that he had been made a convert to the principles upon which it was based by the evidence that had been adduced before the secret committee. The avowal of these principles by the government was a retractation altogether unexpected at the time. In the same letter to which we have just referred, Mr. Ward writes from London to his friend at Oxford: 'Those that are near the scene of action are not less surprised than yourself at the turn the bullion question has taken. Canning says it is the greatest wonder that he has witnessed in the political world.' In

a preceding letter, written from Paris soon after the announcement of the new profession of faith by his old friends had reached him, the same shrewd observer, himself, though no zealot in politics, a steady ministerialist, with all the ordinary sympathies of a party-man, and just about to start for England to take his seat in the new parliament, to which he had been returned on a vacancy, after having been thrown out at the general election, had thus expressed his opinion of the condition of the government: 'I presume your friend Van [Vansittart] will be turned out. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive he should stay in after the committee has reported upon principles directly opposite to his own. But his removal, and the substitution of Peel or Huskisson, will by no means cure the defects of the present ministry, which has suffered itself to be dragged through the dirt the whole session. For the sake of the country, as well as for its own, it ought to make some effort to raise itself from the state of discredit and insignificance into which it has fallen; occasioned not so much by great strength or clear justice on the side of its opponents, as by the wavering conduct of lazy, capricious, pragmatical friends, and by its own want of courage in not proposing to them the alternative of a more vigorous administration, or of instant resignation. As it is, we have a most vigorous ministry, but no government; an evil which, if it endures much longer, will be severely felt both at home and abroad.' A letter from Lord Liverpool to Lord Eldon, which Mr. Twiss has published, shows that the view of matters taken by the prime-minister himself at this time closely coincided with that which Mr. Ward thus expressed. The defeat of the government on Sir James Mackintosh's motion for a select committee on the state of the criminal law, the large minority on the Roman Catholic question, and again the success of Lord Archibald Hamilton's motion for Scotch burgh-reform, had shown, as Mr. Twiss observes, under what imperfect control the House of Commons was. When the plan to be taken for the restoration of a metallic currency was first proposed in the cabinet, it is conjectured not to have met with the concurrence of the lord chan-

cellor; and in a communication to the premier, he appears to have suggested the postponement of the question for a couple of years. Lord Liverpool's reply is dated the 10th of May. After expressing his concern to find that they differ on so essential a point, his lordship proceeds: 'I am sanguine enough to think that we have a reasonable chance of success in carrying the measures which were discussed on Saturday; but, whether I may turn out to be right or wrong, as to this I am quite satisfied, after long and anxious consideration, that, if we cannot carry what has been proposed, it is far, far better for the country that we should cease to be the government. After the defeats we have already experienced during this session, our remaining in office is a *positive* evil. It confounds all ideas of government in the minds of men. It disgraces us *personally*, and renders us less capable every day of being of any real service to the country, either now or hereafter. If, therefore, things are to remain as they are, I am quite clear that there is no advantage, in any way, in our being the persons to carry on the public service. A strong and decisive effort can alone redeem our character and credit, and is as necessary for the country as it is for ourselves. As to a postponement for two years, it would be mere self-delusion, and is far more objectionable, in my judgment, in every bearing, than at once renouncing all idea of setting the finances of the country right.'* There is reason to believe that the bold course taken by ministers on the bank question did

* We may remark, however, that this letter hardly bears out the interpretation put upon it by Mr. Twiss, that the chancellor did not at first concur with the majority of the cabinet in their favourable opinion of Mr. Ricardo's plan. His difference with Lord Liverpool may have been simply on the prudence or expediency of the government taking its stand upon that plan, and endeavouring to force it at the present moment upon the acceptance of parliament. This, at least, may have been all the dissent that he professed. We may admit that the new monetary doctrine was not likely to find the readiest or most enthusiastic of disciples either in Eldon or Vansittart; but it is hardly to be supposed that any member of the cabinet could have deferred to so late a moment an intimation of absolute hostility to the principles of the government plan. The report of both the secret committees had by this time been presented.

produce something of the effect which Lord Liverpool anticipated, and strengthened them both within the walls of parliament and out of doors. We find Lord Sidmouth writing to Lord Exmouth on the 21st of June: 'The close of our parliamentary campaign is far more satisfactory than its commencement. The government has now received decisive proofs of that degree of confidence without which it could not be conducted honourably to ourselves, or usefully to the public.' The home secretary and his colleagues, however, had got released only for a very short time from the warfare of parliament, when they found themselves in the thick of another of a different and more serious description.

Reform meetings had continued to be held occasionally in the manufacturing districts from the beginning of the year. It was on the 18th of January that Orator Hunt made his first appearance in a public capacity in Manchester. Application had been made to the borough-reeve and constables to summon a meeting to petition parliament for the repeal of the corn-law. On their refusal an anonymous advertisement appeared, fixing the meeting for the day we have mentioned. Hunt, who had accepted an invitation to preside, was met by the multitude, and conducted into the town in a style which must have been very soothing to his vanity—flags with the mottoes of 'No Corn-laws,' 'Universal Suffrage,' 'Rights of Man,' 'Hunt and Liberty,' being borne before him; the gathering-place was that same St. Peter's Field, soon to be made so famous by the events of another day. Hunt in his speech derided the proposal of petitioning parliament, and the demand of the assembly was put into the form of a remonstrance to the prince-regent; other speeches, of more or less violence, were delivered; and then the people peaceably dispersed. An evening or two after this, Hunt was roughly handled in the theatre at Manchester by some officers of the 7th hussars, who alleged that he had hissed when 'God save the King' was called for—an incident which, of course, he did not fail to turn to account. He immediately wrote to the Duke of York, the commander-in-chief, and published his letter. At the same time he wrote to Samuel Bamford at Middleton, re-

questing that zealous follower, as he then was, to come to him. When they met the next day, he directed Bamford to procure some ten or a dozen stout fellows to take their places in the pit on the evening of the following Monday, when he would again present himself in the theatre. On the appointed night Bamford was at the pit-door by six o'clock, accompanied by nine other Middleton cotton or silk weavers, picked men, each armed with a stout cudgel. The ten rough-looking country-fellows had attracted some notice as they passed through the streets. Bamford gives a graphic description of them, which we quote the rather, as it must be understood to set before us the writer's own personal appearance, at least in general outline: 'They were all young men—tall, gaunt, and square-built—long-legged, free-limbed, and lithe as stag-hounds; and as they went tramp, tramp, along the flags, people looked, startled, and looked again; while the observed ones, nothing noticing, went onwards like men who knew their work, and were both able and willing to perform it.' A crowd soon collected and filled the street in which the theatre stood; but any serious mischief was prevented by the prudent determination of the manager to have no performance that evening. Hunt, however, had his triumph, and one which suited his purpose as well, and was probably quite as much to his taste, as would have been any he could have had in a mêlée within the walls of the theatre. After some time a coach drove into the street, and on its being ascertained to contain the great popular champion and some of his friends, a loud huzza burst from the dense multitude. A few hisses were soon silenced. 'Hunt,' continues Bamford, 'then mounted the box, and, addressing the people, stated that the manager had written to him, saying there would not be any performance that night, and requesting, I think, that he would come up and try to get the people to disperse and go home. He next entered on some general topics, and, with singular bad taste, to say the least of it—for his impetuosity overran his judgment—he said the authorities only wanted a pretext to let the bloody butchers of Waterloo loose upon the people; and concluded by advising them to retire to their homes peaceably. We then gave three cheers, the carriage disappeared,

and the street was soon deserted. Our party went to the Robin Hood, where we were joined by a score or two of others, and we set to and caroused until midnight, and then returned home.'

The rest of the winter and the spring passed in quiet, and without any movement among the working-classes to excite alarm or uneasiness. As the year advanced, however, a growing depression in the labour-market was experienced in all the districts of the kingdom where the population was the most numerous. The biographer of Lord Sidmouth has printed a letter addressed to that minister, in December of the preceding year, by Lord Sheffield (Gibbon's friend), in which the writer, a very old man, but with his faculties still entire and active, and accustomed all his life to watch the fluctuations in the economical state of the country, reports his views both on the actual condition of things at that moment and on the prospects of the future. He cannot, he says, resist the pleasure of communicating the very satisfactory accounts he has received of the state of trade and manufactures from different parts, and especially from the neighbourhood of Birmingham, the rest of Warwickshire, and from Staffordshire. 'Both trade and manufactures,' he goes on to observe, 'are in a flourishing condition, and likely to improve still further. There appears to be little speculation beyond the regular demands of the different markets, men without adequate capital finding it almost impossible to procure credit; so that there is now no disposition to force a trade, and no injurious competition among the merchants to procure the execution of orders, and, consequently, wages are fair and reasonable.' In point of fact, however, although Lord Sheffield was correct in his belief that the season of unsafe speculation had passed away, he was too hasty or too sanguine in assuming that the mischievous results of the late extravagant overtrading were yet exhausted. It has been common to attribute the commercial pressure which was felt throughout the spring and summer of this year 1819, in whole or in part, to the measures that were taken by the legislature for the restoration of a metallic or at least convertible currency, and the contraction of the circulation to which the

bank is assumed to have been thereby driven in its own defence. Mr. Tooke has demonstrated the entirely imaginary nature of this theory by many facts and considerations, and especially by the fact that the bank did not reduce its issues during the period of the pressure, and that no such contraction of the circulation as is alleged then took place. The amount of Bank of England paper in circulation was, on the contrary, rather greater in August than it had been in February. The late excessive importations, however, were continuing to produce their natural effects, or rather the consequent and inevitable fall of prices was at last bringing down the speculators in great numbers; the bankruptcies in each of the six months from February to July inclusive were about double the ordinary average; credit sustained a shock; the interest of money rose; while the glut in the market of commodities obstructed the channels, the pressure in the money-market clogged the wheels of trade; finally, the market of labour came in for its share of the universal depression; employment became more difficult to be procured; wages fell. At the same time food maintained a high price; wheat, which had been at 80*s.* in February, had only fallen to 68*s.* 10*d.* in June, and had risen again to 75*s.* in August. The first meetings of the operative classes, accordingly, were called to consider the low rate of wages. Such were those of the gingham-weavers of Carlisle and the neighbourhood in the end of May. These were succeeded, towards the middle of the following month, by others at Hunslet Moor near Leeds, at Glasgow, and at Ashton-under-Lyne, which assumed more of a political character, but at which the distress under which the people were suffering still supplied the text of every speech, and parliamentary reform and other such measures were proposed and recommended chiefly as remedies for that. The agitation, however, grew bolder as it proceeded; and the government now began to look at what was going on with considerable anxiety and apprehension. Still no breach of the public peace had been committed. On occasion of the Glasgow meeting, which took place on the 16th, a large body of military was in readiness to act; the multitude which assembled on the Green that summer

afternoon amounted, it is supposed, to between thirty and forty thousand persons; but after going through their work, they dispersed as quietly as if they had been only three or four met together. What took place at this convention, however, illustrates the natural course of mob deliberation. The people, mostly poor cotton-weavers, either out of employment or working at the lowest wages, appear to have been drawn together in the first instance simply by the hope of getting something done which might better their condition; the resolutions proposed by the parties that had called the meeting, after a statement of the prevailing distress, concluded with a petition to the prince-regent to the effect that his royal highness would be graciously pleased to afford such of their number as wished it the means of emigrating to Canada, the emigrants engaging to repay the expense by yearly remittances of produce. But upon these original resolutions an amendment was moved, declaring that no good was to be expected from anything except annual parliaments, universal suffrage, and a diminution of taxation; speeches were delivered scouting alike emigration and petitioning, unless indeed the people, as was strongly recommended, would march in a body to London, and present their petition to the regent themselves; and in the end the amendment was declared to be carried, though the vote in its favour was obtained, as is alleged, only by its supporters having taken possession of the space immediately around the hustings, and knocking down the hats and uplifted hands of their opponents, whose peaceable disposition prevented them from resenting or resisting such treatment. The oratory at the Ashton-under-Lyne meeting—where the chair was taken by a person calling himself the Rev. Joseph Harrison, and one of the speakers was the self-taught, or rather untaught, medical practitioner, Dr. Healey, who makes so amusing a figure in Bamford's autobiography—was still more violent and extravagant. At another great meeting, which took place at Stockport on the 28th of June, the chairman was Sir Charles Wolseley, Bart., who appears to have made his *début* on this occasion. In an address which he delivered before descending from his post of honour, Sir Charles,

after swearing to be faithful to the cause of annual parliaments and universal suffrage so long as his heart's blood should flow in his veins, informed his admiring auditors that his political career had commenced in France, that he was one of those who mounted the ramparts of the Bastile, at the commencement of the revolution in that country, and that, if he did that for France, he should never shrink from attacking the Bastiles of his own country. At this meeting, one of the insignia displayed from the hustings was the cap of liberty on the top of a flag-staff. On that day fortnight, the 12th of July, another meeting was held at New Hall-hill, near Birmingham, where Sir Charles Wolseley was elected 'legislatorial attorney and representative' for that town. This transaction seems to have startled government more than anything that had yet taken place, and probably determined it not to stand any longer aloof. Indictments were now presented both against Wolseley and Harrison for seditious words spoken at the Stockport meeting, and, true bills having been found by the grand jury, Sir Charles was arrested at his own house of Wolseley Park in Staffordshire, on the 19th. On the 21st, a meeting was held at Smithfield in London, at which Hunt presided; it had been announced for some time, and was looked forward to with considerable apprehension; a strong force, both civil and military, was stationed at various points in the vicinity of the place; but the demeanour of the assembled people was perfectly peaceable from first to last. Here Harrison was arrested on the hustings by the same constable, Buck, who had taken Sir Charles Wolseley into custody two days before, and who the next day on bringing Harrison to Stockport, was there attacked by some of the friends and disciples of his prisoner, one of whom fired a pistol at him and lodged the bullet in his body.

Three remarkable innovations are particularised in the contemporary accounts as having distinguished the present stage of the popular movement. It is stated to have been now that the reformers first assumed the name of Radicals. We have given in a former page Bamford's account of the origin of female reform associations. 'An entirely novel and truly portentous circumstance,' says the *Annual*

Register for 1819, 'was the formation of a *Female* Reform Society at Blackburn, near Manchester, from which circular-letters were issued, inviting the wives and daughters of workmen in different branches of manufacture to form *sister* societies, for the purpose of co-operating with the men, and of instilling into the minds of their children "a deep-rooted hatred of our tyrannical rulers." A deputation from this society attended the Blackburn reform meeting, and, mounting the scaffold, presented a cap of liberty and an address to the assembly. The example of these females was successfully recommended to imitation by the orators at other meetings.' The Blackburn meeting here alluded to appears to have been held on the 5th of July. The third circumstance is the military training alleged to have been now practised by the reformers. There is, and can be, no dispute about the fact; the only question is as to the design or object of the practice. Numerous informations upon this matter were taken by the Lancashire magistrates, and transmitted to the government, in the first days of August. We find one of the magistrates writing to Lord Sidmouth on the 5th of that month, that 'the drilling parties increase very extensively.' On the 7th, several persons state upon oath, that 'in various parts of the neighbourhood of Bury there are nightly assemblies of great numbers of men, who meet together to learn and practise military training.' Other witnesses swear, on the 9th, to having seen the same thing going on in the neighbourhood of Bolton. Many of the informations relate to the drilling of a large number of persons on Sunday, the 8th, at Tandle Hill, near Rochdale One of the informants speaks of a man who told him that he had been drilled there on that day, and that a similar meeting would take place on the Sunday follwing, but that that would be the last. These dates are very important. An impression was generally produced at the time that the training had been going on in secret for a long while, and that it was a part of the general tactics of the radical reform movement, the dark purpose of which was placed beyond doubt by the extreme care with which the practice had been concealed for many months. But there is in fact no evidence whatever to show that

anything of the kind existed anywhere previous to these first days of the month of August, and we have just seen that the persons engaged in the drilling themselves spoke of it with perfect frankness as far as appears, and without seeming to have any intention to deceive, as something that would be all over in a few days. It has all the look of having been merely a preparation for some particular occasion. That it was really nothing more we are assured by Bamford. It was, according to his straightforward account, adopted solely with a view to the great meeting to be held at Manchester on the 16th of this month. 'It was deemed expedient,' says Bamford, 'that this meeting should be as morally effective as possible, and that it should exhibit a spectacle such as had never before been witnessed in England. We had frequently been taunted by the press with our ragged, dirty appearance at these assemblages; with the confusion of our proceedings, and the mob-like crowds in which our numbers were mustered; and we determined that for once at least these reflections should not be deserved.' Of four injunctions issued by the committees, the observance of two—cleanliness and sobriety—was left to the good sense of individuals; that of the other two, order and peace, was provided for by general regulations. The drilling was the discipline adopted to secure order in their movements. 'These drillings,' Bamford adds, 'were also, to our sedentary weavers and spinners, periods of healthful exercise and enjoyment. . . . . When dusk came, and we could no longer see to work, we jumped from our looms, rushed to the sweet cool air of the fields or the waste lands, or the green lane sides. . . . . Or in the grey of a fine Sunday morn we would saunter through the mists fragrant with the night odour of flowers and of new hay and ascending the Tandle Hill, salute the broad sun as he climbed from behind the high moors of Saddleworth. . . . . There was not any arms—no use for any—no pretence for any; nor would they have been permitted. Some of the elderly men, the old soldiers, or those who came to watch, might bring a walking-staff; or a young fellow might pull a stake from a hedge in going to drill, or in returning home; but, assuredly, we had nothing like arms about us.

There were no armed meetings; there were no midnight drillings. Why should we seek to conceal what we had no hesitation in performing in broad day? There was not anything of the sort.' We believe this to be the true account of the matter; and that the government, the magistrates, probably many of the informants of the latter themselves, and the public in general, were frightened by an imagination of what had no existence. The drilling, whatever it might have led to, or have become if allowed to go on, had not, as far as it had yet gone, anything of the character ascribed to it. It was neither a clandestine nor an armed drilling. Whether or no it was a thing which the law should have allowed, is another question. It was perhaps liable to be abused, or carried out to purposes very different from its original one. Bamford himself admits that it had its seductions and dangers, or at least its liabilities to misconstruction, both by lookers-on, and, in some degree, even by those engaged in it. 'Some extravagances,' he observes, 'some acts, and some speeches, better let alone, certainly did take place. When the men clapped their hands in "standing at ease," some would jokingly say it was "firing," whilst those who were sent to observe us—and probably we were seldom unattended by such—and who knew little about military motions, would take the joke as a reality, and report accordingly; whence probably it would be surmised that we had arms, and that our drillings were only preparatory to their more effective use.'

We are now come to the great event of the year, and the most memorable incident in the history of these popular movements. The election of Sir Charles Wolseley at Birmingham appears to have suggested a similar proceeding to the reformers of Manchester. Mr. Hunt, we suppose, must have been the person who was to have had the honour of being elected legislatorial attorney for that town. On Saturday, the 31st of July, an advertisement was published in the *Manchester Observer*, inviting the inhabitants to meet on Monday, the 9th of August, in 'the area near St. Peter's Church,' for the purposes of choosing a representative, and of adopting Major Cartwright's plan of parliamentary reform. The magistrates

immediately put forth placards, declaring the intended meeting to be illegal, and warning the people to abstain from attending it at their peril. Upon this, on Wednesday, the 4th of August, the parties who had called the meeting announced in a hand-bill that it would not take place, but that a requisition would be addressed to the borough-reeve and constables, requesting them to convene a meeting at as early a day as possible, 'to consider the propriety of adopting the most legal and effectual means of adopting reform in the Commons House of Parliament.' This requisition was numerously signed in the course of the day. On its prayer being refused by the magistrates, the parties who had originally moved in the matter gave notice that the meeting would take place in St. Peter's Field on Monday the 16th. It was intimated that Mr. Hunt would take the chair.

All was now busier preparation than ever in every town and village around Manchester. It is remarkable that the great manufacturing metropolis itself seems to have remained comparatively unaroused, and not to have contributed anything like its due proportion of numbers to the mighty reform gathering. Indeed, while bodies of three, four, or five thousand persons are spoken of as pouring in from almost every one of the two-and-thirty points of the compass, and every separate neighbouring district was represented on the ground by its dense and extended array, we do not recollect that any distinct body of Manchester reformers is mentioned at all. Some of the accounts, indeed, expressly state that the Manchester working-people generally took little part in the demonstration, and that such of them as joined the crowd seemed to have come for the most part only as lookers-on.

We believe that Bamford's animated description of the procession of his fellow-townsmen, the reformers of Middleton, who put themselves under his guidance, conveys a fair impression of the spirit in which the affair was entered upon by the generality of those engaged in it. By eight o'clock on that Monday morning, he tells us, the whole town of Middleton was on the alert. Those who did not intend to go to the meeting came out at least to see the procession. The marshalled array was headed by twelve

youths in two rows, each holding in his hand a branch of laurel, 'as a token,' says Bamford, 'of amity and peace;' and therefore, we must suppose, representing the olive on this occasion. There were two silk flags, the one blue, the other green, with 'Unity and Strength,' 'Liberty and Fraternity,' 'Parliaments Annual,' and 'Suffrage Universal,' inscribed on them in letters of gold; and a cap of liberty, of crimson velvet, with a tuft of laurel, was borne aloft between them. The men marched five abreast, every hundred having a leader distinguished by a sprig of laurel in his hat; over these centurions were superior officers similarly decorated. Bamford himself, as conductor of the whole, walked at the head of the column, with a bugleman by his side to sound his orders. Before setting out, the entire number, of not less than three thousand men, having formed a hollow square, while probably as many more people stood around them, and silence having been obtained, Bamford shortly addressed them. After expressing his hope that their conduct would be marked by a steadiness and seriousness befitting the important occasion, he requested them 'not to offer any insult or provocation by word or deed, nor to notice any persons who might do the same by them, but to keep such persons as quiet as possible; for, if they began to retaliate, the least disturbance might serve as a pretext for dispersing the meeting. If the peace-officers, he added, should come to arrest himself or any other person, they were not to offer any resistance, but to suffer them to execute their office peaceably. He also told them that, in conformity with a rule laid down by the committee, no sticks or weapons of any description would be allowed to be carried in the ranks; and those who had such were requested to put them aside. Many sticks, he states, were in consequence left behind, and only a few walking-staves were retained by the oldest and most infirm. There is reason, however, to believe that sticks were carried to the meeting in greater numbers by some of the other parties. 'I may say with truth,' continues Bamford, speaking of the body under his own command, 'that we presented a most respectable assemblage of labouring-men; all were decently though humbly attired; and I noticed not even one who did not exhibit a white

Sunday's shirt, a neckcloth, and other apparel, in the same clean, though homely, condition.' After their leader's speech, which was received with cheers, they resumed their marching order, and, the music having struck up, set out at a slow pace. They were soon joined by the Rochdale people, the united numbers making probably six thousand men. A hundred or two of women, mostly young wives, preceded the column; about as many girls, sweethearts of the unmarried lads, danced to the music, or sung snatches of popular songs; even some children went forward with them, although a score or two of others were sent back; while some hundreds of stragglers walked alongside. As they proceeded they received various accessions to their ranks. At Newton, not far from Manchester, Bamford was beckoned to by a gentleman to whom he was known, one of the partners in a firm in whose employment the reform leader had lately been. Taking Bamford's hand, he said kindly, though in a tone expressing some anxiety, that he hoped no harm was intended by all those people that were coming in. Bamford replied that he would pledge his life for their entire peaceableness. 'I asked him,' he continues, 'to notice them: did they look like persons wishing to outrage the law? Were they not, on the contrary, evidently heads of decent working families, or members of such families? "No, no," I said, "my dear sir, and old respected master, if any wrong or violence take place they will be committed by men of a different stamp from these." He said he was very glad to hear me say so; he was happy he had seen me, and gratified by the manner in which I had expressed myself. I asked, did he think we should be interrupted at the meeting? He said he did not believe we should. "Then," I replied, "all will be well;" and, shaking hands, with mutual good wishes, I left him, and took my station as before.' After they had entered Manchester, they heard that, among other parties which had preceded them, the Lees and Saddleworth Union had been led by Dr. Healey, walking before a pitch-black flag, with staring white letters, forming the words: 'Equal Representation or Death,' 'Love'—two hands joined, and a heart; all in white paint, and presenting one of the most sepulchral-looking objects that

could be contrived. 'The idea,' observes Bamford, 'of my diminutive friend leading a funeral procession of his own patients—such it appeared to me—was calculated to force a smile even at that thoughtful moment.' They seem to have reached the place of meeting, where they found an immense multitude already collected, about half an hour before noon. As other parties successively arrived, they became more and more enclosed, till they finally stood about the centre of the vast multitude. About half an hour after their arrival, reiterated shouts proclaimed the near approach of the great man of the day; Hunt came, preceded by a band of music, and flags flying, standing up in an open barouche, on the box of which sat a woman, who, it afterwards appeared, had made no proper or original part of the show, but had only been hoisted into the carriage as it passed through the crowd, while a number of his male friends were seated around him. 'Their approach,' says Bamford, 'was hailed by one universal shout from probably eighty thousand persons. They threaded their way slowly past us, and through the crowd, which Hunt eyed, I thought, with almost as much of astonishment as satisfaction.' The hustings, erected upon two waggons, stood close to the place where Bamford and his party were posted.

The arrangements made by the authorities for the part they were to act, on the other hand, are to be found authentically detailed in the communications addressed by themselves at the time to the government, which were afterwards laid before parliament, in the evidence given on the subsequent trial of Hunt and his associates at York, and most distinctly in a valuable and interesting narrative of the events of the day, furnished to the biographer of Lord Sidmouth by Sir William J. H. Jolliffe, Bart., M.P., who, as a lieutenant of the 15th hussars, was himself an actor in the scene he has described. A numerous committee of magistrates of the county had been constantly sitting since Saturday morning, taking depositions, and considering what they should do. It seems to have been upon considerable hesitation that they resolved not to attempt to prevent the meeting, but to defer the execution of a warrant which was issued for the arrest of the leaders,

till the people had all assembled, and the proceedings had commenced. The reasons for the adoption of this course are not explained; it is only stated that the committee 'contented themselves, till they saw what the complexion of the meeting might be, or what circumstances might arise, with coming to this determination only, which they adopted in concurrence with some of the most intelligent gentlemen of the town.' About two hundred special constables had been sworn in; and the military force which they had at their command consisted of six troops of the 15th hussars, which had been quartered in the cavalry barracks near the town for about six weeks; a troop of horse-artillery, with two guns; nearly the whole of the 31st regiment of infantry; some companies of the 88th regiment; the Cheshire Yeomanry, comprising between three and four hundred men, who only arrived on the morning of the 16th; and, lastly, a troop of Manchester Yeomanry, numbering about forty members, chiefly wealthy master-manufacturers. The special constables and the Manchester Yeomanry the magistrates retained under their own immediate orders; the command of the rest of the force was taken by Colonel Guy L'Estrange, of the 31st regiment, as the senior officer, in the absence of Sir John Byng (now Earl of Strafford), the general of the district, who was at his head-quarters at Pontefract, and to whom it would appear, among all the preparations that were made, no intimation had been sent of what was intended to be done, or of the strong view that was taken of the seriousness of the emergency. Of course, however, the military could only act on being authorised or called upon by the civil power. Early in the forenoon of the 16th, the constables were posted, one portion of them close to the hustings in the centre of St. Peter's Field, the rest so as to maintain a communication from thence to a private house on the south side of that irregular square space of ground, to which the magistrates repaired about eleven o'clock from the Star Inn, where they had first assembled. The distance from this house to the hustings was stated on the trial at York to have been about three or four hundred yards, but it was probably not quite so much; the entire extent of St. Peter's Field, now all built over, was only

between two and three acres The military force was disposed as follows. Two squadrons of the 15th hussars, having been marched into town about ten o'clock, were dismounted in a wide street to the north of St. Peter's Field, and at the distance of nearly a quarter of a mile from it; the Cheshire Yeomanry were formed on their left in the same street; of the remaining troops of the hussars, one was attached to the artillery, which took up a position between the cavalry barracks and the town, and the other remained in charge of the barracks. The Manchester Yeomanry were stationed in a street to the east of the field. The infantry were kept in readiness but were not called upon to act till after the meeting had been dispersed. The whole work, as will presently appear, was done by the forty Manchester Yeomanry, and the two squadrons—four troops, or three hundred and twenty men—of the 15th hussars.

The band which accompanied Hunt and his party on their approach played the national airs of *Rule Britannia* and *God save the King*, during which, it is said, the people generally, or many of them at least, held their hats off. No time was then lost in proceeding to the business of the day. As soon as Hunt and his friends had mounted the hustings, the music ceased, upon which it was formally proposed that Mr. Hunt should take the chair; the motion, being seconded, was carried by acclamation, and the orator, advancing to the front of the stage, took off his white hat, and addressed the now silent and listening multitude. He had only, however, uttered a few sentences when a confused murmur and pressure, beginning at one verge of the field, and rapidly rolling onwards, brought him to a pause. The soldiers were upon the people.

The account given by Mr. Hulton, the chairman of the bench of magistrates, when he was afterwards examined on the trial at York, was that, when after the meeting had assembled, the warrant for the apprehension of the reform leaders was given to Nadin, the chief-constable, that person declared that he could not execute it without military aid; upon which two letters were despatched, one to the commander of the Manchester Yeomanry, the other to Colonel L'Estrange, requiring them to come to the house

where the magistrates were. The yeomanry, being nearest at hand, made their appearance first. They came from Mosley Street. These must have been the troops that were seen by Bamford as he was retiring from the ground with a friend to get some refreshment. 'I stood on tip-toe,' he says, 'and looked to the direction whence the noise proceeded, and saw a party of cavalry in blue and white uniform come trotting sword in hand round the corner of a garden-wall, and to the front of a row of new houses, where they reined up in a line.' This was in front of the house where the magistrates were. Mr. Hulton says that the troop came up at a quick pace, and that, the moment they appeared, the crowd set up a tremendous shout. The shout, as Bamford understood it, was one of good-will. It appears that, when Hunt first saw the confusion, he exclaimed that it was some trick, meaning, perhaps, an attempt to frighten the meeting, and called to the people to be firm, and to give three cheers, which was done. All parties agree that after the people had shouted, the yeomanry, who had now halted about three minutes, waved their swords and advanced. There are contradictory accounts of the pace at which they endeavoured to move forward; in point of fact, they appear to have penetrated the dense crowd not in a body at all, or in any kind of marching order, but singly and separately. Of course they were soon brought to a stand. This was the state in which things were when the two squadrons of hussars came up, having made their way round by the west side of the field. 'It was then,' says Sir W. Jolliffe, 'for the first time that I saw the Manchester troop of yeomanry; they were scattered singly, or in small groups, over the greater part of the field, literally hemmed up, and wedged into the mob, so that they were powerless either to make an impression or to escape: in fact, they were in the power of those whom they were designed to overawe; and it required only a glance to discover their helpless position, and the necessity of our being brought to their rescue.' Here, then, was the second device of the magistrates for the execution of the warrant utterly baffled; their first notion was to intrust it to Nadin, the constable, who told them that to execute it with the force at his

command was impossible; and now the troop of armed yeoman, which was next tried, and which had actually made the attempt, was stuck fast, and could neither advance nor retreat. Mr. Hulton's own account is that, at the moment when the hussars arrived, he conceived the Manchester yeomanry to be completely beaten. When Colonel L'Estrange, he says, asked him what he was to do, he exclaimed: 'Good God, sir, do you not see how they are attacking the yeomanry? Disperse the crowd.' On this the word 'Forward' was instantly given, the trumpet sounded, and the cavalry dashed among the multitude. Their charge swept everything before it. 'People, yeomen, and constables,' says Sir W. Jolliffe, 'in their confused attempts to escape, ran one over the other; so that, by the time we had arrived at the end of the field, the fugitives were literally piled up to a considerable elevation above the level of the ground.' As soon as he had given his orders to Colonel L'Estrange, Mr. Hulton tells us he left the window, because he 'would rather not see any advance of the military.' The hussars generally, Sir W. Jolliffe states, drove the people forward with the flats of their swords; 'but sometimes,' he adds, 'as is almost inevitably the case when men are placed in such situations, the edge was used, both by the hussars, and, as I have heard, by the yeomen also; but of this latter fact, however, I was not cognizant; and, believing though I do that nine out of ten of the sabre wounds were caused by the hussars, I must still consider that it redounds highly to the humane forbearance of the men of the 15th, that more wounds were not received, when the vast numbers are taken into consideration with whom they were brought into hostile collision.' There can be no doubt, however, as he observes, that 'the far greater amount of injuries arose from the pressure of the routed multitude.' The scene during the few minutes that it took to effect the dispersion must have been terrific in the extreme. Bamford, who does not distinguish between the advance of the yeomanry and that of the hussars, and whose situation did not allow him to do so, has described it with perhaps a little rhetorical licence in some particulars, but with probably little exaggeration of the general effect. 'Stand fast,' he called out to those

around him, when he saw the troops darting forward; 'they are riding upon us; stand fast.' 'And there was a general cry,' he says, 'in our quarter, of "Stand fast." The cavalry were in confusion: they evidently could not, with all the weight of man and horse, penetrate that compact mass of human beings; and their sabres were plied to hew a way through naked held-up hands and defenceless heads; and then chopped limbs and wound-gaping skulls were seen; and groans and cries were mingled with the din of that horrid confusion. "Ah! ah!" "For shame! for shame!" was shouted. Then "Break! break! They are killing them in front, and they cannot get away!" and there was a general cry of "Break! break!" For a moment the crowd held back as in a pause; then was a rush, heavy and resistless as a headlong sea, and a sound like low thunder, with screams, prayers, and imprecations from the crowd, moiled and sabre-doomed, who could not escape. . . . . In ten minutes from the commencement of the havoc, the field was an open and almost deserted space. The sun looked down through a sultry and motionless air. . . . . The hustings remained, with a few broken and hewed flag staves erect, and a torn and gashed banner or two dropping; whilst over the whole field were strewed caps, bonnets, hats, shawls, and shoes, and other parts of male and female dress, trampled, torn, and bloody. . . . . Several mounds of human beings still remained where they had fallen, crushed down and smothered. Some of these still groaning, others with staring eyes, were gasping for breath; and others would never breathe more. All was silent, save those low sounds, and the occasional snorting and pawing of steeds. Persons might sometimes be noticed peeping from attics and over the tall ridgings of houses, but they quickly withdrew, as if fearful of being observed, or unable to sustain the full gaze of a scene so hideous and abhorrent.' About thirty wounded persons were carried to the infirmary in the course of that afternoon and the following day; and about forty more were able to come themselves to have slighter injuries looked at and dressed. There were, no doubt, some cases besides that were not heard of. The greater number of the injuries were contusions or fractures; the cases of sabre wounds do not

appear to have been more than twenty or thirty. Three or four persons were wounded on the evening of the fatal day by the fire of one of the regiments of foot, which was ordered to clear the streets where the people had re-assembled in great numbers and their conduct had begun to be threatening. Altogether the number of lives lost appears to have been five or six, including one of the special constables, ridden over by the hussars, and one of the Manchester yeomen, struck off his horse by a brickbat, and who had his skull fractured either by the blow or the fall.

Hunt and some eight or ten of his friends were seized by the first of the military who came up to the hustings; and, being brought up before the magistrates on the Friday following, were then remanded on a charge of high treason. On that day week, however, by which time Bamford and one or two others who had made their escape on the day of the meeting had been apprehended, having been brought up again, they were informed that government had for the present abandoned that charge, and that they would be only detained till they should find bail, to be tried for the misdemeanour of having conspired to alter the law by force and threats.

CHAPTER XVII.

Conduct of the Manchester Magistrates—Conduct of the Government—General Excitement—Session of Parliament—Death of George III.

THE Manchester Massacre, as it came very generally to be designated, was at once felt on all hands to have made an epoch in the history of the contest with Radicalism. A new scene of that drama had commenced. Other feelings were called up, and a change was to come over the course of action, on both sides. The Manchester magistrates themselves were probably as much astonished as anybody at what they had done. Many other Radical meetings had been held in all parts of the country, but nothing had

happened at any of them like what had taken place here. The dispersion of a popular meeting by armed force, on the ground solely of its being formidable from its numbers, might be a legal proceeding, but similar circumstances had again and again occurred of late without its having been adopted. Why should not this meeting have been allowed to be held without being so interfered with, as well as any of those that had preceded it? Could not the public safety have been as effectually preserved now as on so many former occasions, merely by the necessary preparations being made for repressing any outbreak on the part of the people, if such should be attempted? Or, if the arrest of Hunt and his associates was necessary or expedient, could that object not have been effected in another way? If it would have been too hazardous for Nadin, the peace-officer, to have attempted to apprehend them during the meeting, as Harrison had been apprehended a few weeks before without difficulty at Smithfield, might they not have been easily seized at any time either before the meeting or after it? These and other such questions could not fail to suggest themselves. But, above all, they must have been conscious—for it is undeniable, and is, indeed, as good as confessed—that, after all their two days' deliberation, they had allowed the morning of the day of meeting to come upon them without being prepared with any determined plan of action. Their notion of being guided by circumstances was manifestly nothing more than a vague hope that something might happen to deliver them in some way or other from their indecision and perplexity, and compel them, as it were, to take some particular course. Accordingly, we see them standing aloof and doing nothing as long as they can. They neither attempt to prevent the meeting taking place, nor to arrest the popular leaders on their way to it. Then, one favourable opportunity having thus been let slip after another, they clutch as if in desperation at what seems their last chance of doing anything. It is determined that the forty Manchester yeomen shall attempt to walk their horses up to the hustings through the densely packed and all but impenetrable multitude, whose closing around each, and separating him from his comrades, as soon as he had moved

a few yards forward, was inevitable. This was not to be guided by circumstances, but to be driven on by the impulse of trepidation or passion. All that followed was the result of the failure of this attempt, which could not but fail. It is clear that the order to the hussars to clear the ground was the thought of the instant. Up to that moment no such proceeding had been contemplated or dreamt of. The people were not allowed to assemble in order that they might be swept off the ground by a charge of cavalry. The dispersion and bloodshed were not premeditated; they were the convulsive effort of the authorities to extricate themselves from a danger, real or imaginary, into which a previous false step had precipitated them. Perhaps a sounder judgment might have seen that the yeomanry, after they had entered the crowd, were not in so much peril as they appeared to be in to Mr. Hulton; but, however this may have been, the grand mistake had been committed in placing them in that position. That this was a blunder was demonstrated by what immediately ensued—was acknowledged by the magistrates themselves in the very next order they issued. Nor was the failure one the blame of which was to be laid upon circumstances having turned out otherwise than might have been expected; the experiment was much the same as if the forty yeomen had been ordered to advance through the water upon a vessel lying a quarter of a mile out at sea. It was an experiment which could not succeed in any circumstances.

On the other hand, however wanting in discretion they may have shown themselves, however grievous an error in judgment they may have committed, it does not appear that the Manchester magistrates can be made out to have done anything absolutely illegal on this occasion. They were of course justified, on the sworn informations they had received, in issuing their warrant for the arrest of Hunt and his associates; the warrant could be legally executed at the time when the attempt to execute it was made; and any resistance, or supposed resistance, to the officer intrusted with it, might be legally put down by any available force which appeared to be necessary for that purpose. This was, no doubt, the view of the case which

determined the government, under the advice of the law-officers, to notify immediately their sanction of what had been done. The statement which Lord Sidmouth afterwards made in parliament was, that the account of what had taken place at Manchester reached ministers on Tuesday night; that on Wednesday one of the magistrates, accompanied by another gentleman, arrived in town to give the government the fullest information on all the circumstances; that a cabinet-council was immediately summoned, at which the attorney and solicitor general were present; that the two gentlemen from Manchester gave minute details of everything; and that the law-officers then gave it as their opinion that the conduct of the magistrates was completely justified by the necessity under which they acted. It appears that the first thing the home secretary did upon this was to write to the prince-regent. The reply of his royal highness was despatched by Sir Benjamin Bloomfield on the 19th, from the *Royal George* yacht, off Christchurch. It conveyed the regent's 'approbation and high commendation of the conduct of the magistrates and civil authorities at Manchester, as well as of the officers and troops, both regular and yeomanry cavalry, whose firmness and effectual support of the civil power preserved the peace of the town on that most critical occasion.' Lord Sidmouth then, on the 21st, addressed letters to the Earls of Derby and Stamford, the lords-lieutenant of Lancashire and Cheshire, intimating that he had been commanded by the prince-regent to request that their lordships would express to the magistrates of the two counties who were present at Manchester on the 16th, 'the great satisfaction derived by his royal highness from their prompt, decisive, and efficient measures for the preservation of the public tranquillity.' Lord Sidmouth's defence of the course he thus took is stated as follows by his biographer: 'Lord Sidmouth was aware that this proceeding would subject him to the charge of precipitation; but he was acting upon what he considered an essential principle of government—namely, to acquire the confidence of the magistracy, especially in critical times, by showing a readiness to support them in all honest, reasonable, and well-intended acts, without inquiring too

minutely whether they might have performed their duty a little better or a little worse. So impressed was his lordship with the importance of this principle, that he constantly declared in after-life, that, had the question recurred, he should again have pursued a course the policy of which was not less obvious than its justice. If, indeed, the government had left those magistrates exposed to the storm of popular indignation, until the verdict against Hunt and his associates in the succeeding year had demonstrated the legality of their conduct,* the magistracy at large must, from the dread of abandonment, have failed in duty towards that royal authority, which either could not or would not stand by them in the hour of peril; and thus, in all probability, the most calamitous consequences would have ensued.' It would appear, however, that although the home secretary had the concurrence of his colleagues in the step which he took, they were not unanimous in adopting the view upon which he acted. Mr. Twiss has published a remarkable letter of Lord Eldon's to his brother Sir William Scott, without date, but evidently written about this time, in which his lordship says: 'Without all doubt the Manchester magistrates must be supported; *but they are very generally blamed here. For my part, I think if the assembly was only an unlawful assembly, that task will be difficult enough in sound reasoning.* If the meeting was an overt act of treason, their justification is complete.' Eldon, who goes on to say that he was clearly of opinion that the meeting was an overt act of treason, and that the previous Birmingham meeting was the same—his argument being, as he afterwards stated it in the House of Lords, 'that numbers constituted force, and force terror, and terror illegality'—pressed for having the prisoners indicted for treason, but was, as we have seen, overruled. It was, it seems, on the 25th that Lord Sidmouth informed the regent that the evidence against Hunt and his associates 'did not afford sufficient ground for proceeding against them for high treason; but that it

* The legality of the conduct of the Manchester magistrates was not one of the questions at issue on Hunt's trial, nor of course was it either demonstrated or noticed in any way whatever in the verdict on that occasion.

fully warranted a prosecution for a treasonable conspiracy, which would be instituted immediately, in order that the bill of indictment might be presented to the grand jury at the ensuing summer assizes for the county of Lancaster.' This was done accordingly, and true bills were found against Hunt and nine others.

Meanwhile the utmost excitement had been produced by the proceedings at Manchester all over the country. On the 22nd, immediately on reading the newspaper account, Sir Francis Burdett addressed a public letter to the electors of Westminster, denouncing the conduct of the magistrates in the most unmeasured terms. For this the attorney-general immediately proceeded against him by an *ex-officio* information for libel. Meetings, at which strong resolutions against both the magistrates and the government were passed, were held in all parts of the kingdom. An address in this spirit, presented to the regent in the beginning of September, from the common-council of the city of London, drew from his royal highness a reply, in which he told its authors that he received their address with deep regret, and that they appeared to know little or nothing either of the circumstances which preceded the late meeting at Manchester or of those which attended it. This, however, did not prevent addresses to the same effect, some more, some less, strongly expressed, being sent in from Westminster, Norwich, York, Bristol, Liverpool, Nottingham, and many other towns. Of the county-meetings the most remarkable was that of the county of York, which was held on the 14th of October, and at which 20,000 persons were supposed to have been present. Among those who signed the requisition to the high-sheriff was Earl Fitzwilliam, and his lordship was also present at the meeting; for which acts, as they were considered, of open opposition to the government, he was immediately dismissed from his office of lord-lieutenant of the West Riding. Before this the Duke of Hamilton, lord-lieutenant of the county of Lanark, had sent a subscription of £50 to the committee for the relief of the Manchester sufferers, accompanied by a letter in which he expressed the alarm that had been excited in his mind by the manner in which the meeting of the 16th of August

had been interrupted. There were not, however, wanting some addresses and declarations on the other side from the smaller towns and counties; and a few associations for raising troops of yeomanry in aid of the civil power were formed in Scotland and in the north of England. The grand jury of the county of Lancaster also threw out a number of bills presented to them against individuals belonging to the Manchester Yeomanry, for cutting and maiming with intent to kill in St. Peter's Field; and the proceedings of an inquest which sat for nine days at Oldham, on the body of one of the persons killed at the meeting, after having been characterised by every species of irregularity and confusion, were at last quashed by the Court of King's Bench. On the whole, the disposition of the classes possessed of property still was generally to rally round and support the government, even although the more reflecting among them might not see reason to approve of everything that had been done in the contest with the democratical party. The opinion of one class of the ministerial adherents may be considered to be expressed in a passage of one of Mr. Ward's letters, written from Paris in the beginning of October: 'What do reasonable people think of the Manchester business? I am inclined to suspect that the magistrates were in too great a hurry, and that their loyal zeal, and the *nova gloria in armis*, tempted the yeomanry to too liberal a use of the sabre; in short, that their conduct has given some colour of reason to the complaints and anger of the Jacobins. The approbation of government was probably given as the supposed price of support from the Tories in that part of the country.'

But in that portion of the population where sympathy with the radical reform agitation was naturally the most strongly felt and the most widely diffused, the only feeling produced by the attack on the Manchester meeting appears to have been one of the keenest exasperation and thirst for revenge. There was no diminution of the audacity which had hitherto characterised the reform movement. Large meetings of the working-classes were held in rapid succession in all the manufacturing districts, at which the most inflammatory speeches were delivered, and the most

daring resolutions passed. It was evident that a more resolute and dangerous spirit than ever had been awakened in the popular mind. Yet it is worthy of remark that no attempt was anywhere made by the authorities to repeat the course which had been taken by the Manchester magistrates, unless we are to except an uncalled-for interference with a meeting held, about the middle of September, at Paisley, which produced a state of disturbance and riot that lasted for three days, and, having extended to Glasgow, was not put down without the military having been called out and employed in both towns. All the other meetings that were held, both assembled and dispersed in peace. But the state of feeling that everywhere prevailed among the operatives was such as excited the greatest anxiety and apprehension. The communications received by government represented the country as being almost on the eve of an insurrection. Indeed, ministers were led at one time to believe that a plan had been arranged for a general rising on a particular day (the 1st of November). The facts may have been exaggerated in many cases by design or by fear; but that the popular temper was in a highly combustible and alarming state, there can be no doubt.

A dissatisfaction with the existing laws for the repression of sedition was one of the first feelings inspired in ministers and many of their adherents by the events of the 16th of August at Manchester. So early as on the 19th of that month, Lord Redesdale, in a letter to Lord Sidmouth, while maintaining the very strong doctrine, that 'every meeting for radical reform was not merely a seditious attempt to undermine the existing constitution of government by bringing it into hatred and contempt, but was an overt act of treasonable conspiracy against that constitution of government including the king as its head,' admits that 'something more explicit was now required,' and suggests that a declaratory law should be passed, 'to remove all doubt of the treasonable criminality of such assemblies.' About the same time we find Lord Eldon writing to his brother: 'In fact, the state of our law is so inapplicable to existing circumstances, that we can't meet the present case; and I am as convinced as I am of my existence, that if parliament don't forthwith

assemble, there is nothing that can be done but to let those meetings take place, reading the Riot Act if there be a riot at any of them.' Lord Sidmouth accordingly, early in September, proposed to Lord Liverpool that parliament should be assembled as soon as possible. The premier was then opposed to the suggestion; a cabinet-council, which met on the 15th of September, came to no decision; another, which met on the 21st, decided against Sidmouth's views; but at a third meeting, on the 8th of October, an order for the assembling of parliament on the 23rd of November was agreed upon.

The session was accordingly opened on that day by the prince-regent in person. Amendments to the address were moved by the opposition in both Houses, and long debates ensued—that in the Commons extending over two nights, and till five o'clock in the morning of the third day; but the ministerial majorities on the division were 159 to 34 in the Lords, and 381 to 150 in the Commons. A collection of papers relative to the internal state of the country having then been presented by command of the prince-regent, four bills were introduced in the Lords on the 29th of November; one by the lord chancellor, entitled: 'An Act to prevent Delay in the Administration of Justice in Cases of Misdemeanour;' the three others, by Lord Sidmouth, entitled, severally: 'An Act to prevent the Training of Persons to the Use of Arms, and to the Practice of Military Evolutions and Exercise;' 'An Act for the more effectual Prevention and Punishment of Blasphemous and Seditious Libels;' and 'An Act to authorise Justices of the Peace, in certain disturbed Counties, to seize and detain Arms collected and kept for purposes dangerous to the Public Peace; to continue in force until the 25th of March, 1822.' On the 3rd of December, Lord Castlereagh introduced in the Commons a bill entitled: 'An Act to subject certain Publications to the Duties of Stamps upon Newspapers, and to make other Regulations for restraining the Abuses arising from the Publication of Blasphemous and Seditious Libels;' and on the 17th of that month, Lord Sidmouth introduced in the Lords a bill entitled: 'An Act for more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies; to continue in force until the end of the

session of parliament next after five years from the passing of the Act.' These measures, which became memorable under the designation of the Six Acts, were strenuously resisted at every stage; but they were all eventually passed. Both Houses then adjourned, on the 29th of December, to the 15th of February, 1820.

In this interval, an event occurred, without occasioning any change whatever except only of certain names and forms, which, if it had happened twenty or even fifteen years before, might possibly have given a new movement to the whole political system of this country and of Europe. Yet it was not without a momentary pause of solemn and even somewhat tender emotion that all ranks of the people received the announcement that the old king was no more. After a seclusion of nearly ten years, George III. died at Windsor, on the evening of Saturday, the 29th of January, 1820, in the eighty-second year of his age, and the sixtieth of his reign. The death of his majesty had been preceded by that of his fourth son, the Duke of Kent, in his fifty-third year, on the 23rd of the same month. Thus, within little more than two years, had been taken away the king and queen, the actual wearers of the crown, the daughter and only child of him by whom it was inherited, and the father of her to whom it was eventually to fall. The birth of that other daughter and only child, our present gracious sovereign, had taken place on the 24th of May, 1819. In the same year, a son had also been born, on the 26th of March, to the Duke of Cambridge; a daughter, who died on the same day, the 27th of March, to the Duke of Clarence; and a son, on the 27th of May, to the Duke of Cumberland.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

Revival of Sedition—Cato-Street Conspiracy—Alarms—The King's Speech—Spies and Informers—Sedition in Scotland—Trials of the Radicals—The Demagogue.

THERE had been a subsidence, for some time before the Manchester massacre of August 1819, of the sedition and rebellious intentions of the sufferers and demagogues who had caused a panic to the government, and a portion of the country magistracy of England and Scotland. The extensive conspiracy supposed by the ruling powers had never existed; and the separate parties of malcontents who had employed the leisure and relieved the painful thoughts of poverty in seditious movements, had become tired of fruitless efforts, of disappointment in their leaders, and of that failure in combination which is the invariable lot of the ill-informed and inexperienced, when they aim at objects too large for their powers. Their funds fell off; their drilling ceased from non-attendance; and they dropped back into their sad homes, to mutter there their discontents, or wait for better days. But the Manchester affair and the subsequent proceedings roused them again as by an express summons; and during the months of September, October, and November, there was a busy reorganisation of the associations of the discontented, who put aside their mutual quarrels to carry on the grand one with the government. It was in November that Sir Herbert Taylor, who held a high office in the establishment of the king, was accosted at Windsor by a man named Edwards, who kept a small shop at Eton for the

sale of plaster-casts, and who gave information of a desperate plot against the ministers. This information was, of course, immediately communicated to Lord Sidmouth. Edwards was taken into the pay of the home office; and the police were employed to verify his statements during the months when he stimulated the purposes of the conspirators, and received their confidence, in order to betray them, day by day, to his paymasters. It was after the affair became known to the government, that an emissary of Oliver the spy appeared at Middleton and elsewhere, and told of other agents who were going about the country with the same commission—to engage the discontented to join in the plot of Thistlewood and his comrades to assassinate the ministers, seize the Bank, the Mansion-house, and the Tower, and establish a provisional government. The discontented refused to join. The scheme was too horrible and too foolish. In the end it appeared that the number involved was very small; so small, that the affair would scarcely deserve a place in history, but for the atrocity of the plan, and the illustration the event affords of the working of the spy-system adopted by the government of the day.

The leader, Thistlewood, was a desperate man; too vindictive about his private wrongs to make much pretence of patriotism. He had been engaged with the Watsons, and acquitted on his trial for that matter. After his acquittal, he had sent a challenge to Lord Sidmouth; and this piece of audacity had procured him a year's imprisonment. He came out of jail thirsting for the blood of the minister. He drew about him a few ignorant and desperate men; and they would have attempted the deed at once—in the autumn of 1819—but for a series of accidents which delayed the enterprise, and gave time for an aggravation of their wickedness by the arts of Edwards the informer. When the affair had been delayed till Christmas, there came the dispersion of the intended victims for the holidays; and then the death of the king and the Duke of Kent, and the royal funerals; and, perhaps, Edwards, who furnished the party with so much information about the ministers, might have told the conspirators how uncertain was the tenure of office by their enemies, who were very

near going out immediately on the accession of George IV., on account of their refusal to procure him a divorce from his queen. The first record of the existence of the plot is in a note from the Duke of Wellington of the 5th of January, wherein he states, that he had 'just heard that Lord Sidmouth had discovered another conspiracy.' On Saturday, February 19th, it was resolved by the gang to murder the ministers, each at his own house; and without further delay, as their poverty would not allow them to wait any longer. On the Tuesday, however, Edwards informed them that there was to be a cabinet-dinner at Lord Harrowby's the next day. Thistlewood sent out for a newspaper, to see if this was true; and, finding it to be so, remarked: 'As there has not been a dinner so long, there will, no doubt, be fourteen or sixteen there; and it will be a rare haul to murder them all together.' Thus it was settled. Some of their number were to watch Lord Harrowby's house, to see that no police or soldiers were brought there. One was to call with a note while the ministers were at dinner; and the others were then to rush in, to commit the murders, carrying bags in which to bring away the heads of Lords Sidmouth and Castlereagh. Then they were to fire the cavalry barracks, by throwing fire-balls into the straw-sheds; and the Bank and Tower were to be taken by the people who, it was hoped, would rise upon the spread of the news.

Edwards was not the only traitor. A man named Hidon, who afterwards found himself well recompensed by the gift of a hackney-coach, went from this final council to warn Lord Harrowby, by putting a letter into his hand during his ride in the Park. No notice was apparently taken. The preparations for dinner went on at Lord Harrowby's till eight o'clock in the evening; but the guests did not arrive. The Archbishop of York, who lived next door, happened to give a dinner that evening; and the arrival of the carriages deceived those of the conspirators who were on the watch in the street, till it was too late to give warning to their comrades, who had assembled in a stable in Cato Street near the Edgeware Road.

While the conspirators were arming themselves in a

room above this stable by the light of one or two candles, the ministers, having dined at home, met at Lord Liverpool's; where they awaited, in great anxiety, the tidings of what the police and soldiers had done. When the news arrived, it was bad. One of the police had been stabbed through the heart, and Thistlewood had escaped. This was owing to the soldiers not having been ready, as ordered, to turn out at a moment's notice. The police proceeded without them; and Smithers, the man who was killed, mounted the ladder which led from the stable to the upper room. Thistlewood stabbed him, and blew out the light; and after the exchange of a few shots in the darkness and confusion, several of the conspirators escaped. A reward of £1000 was immediately offered for the apprehension of Thistlewood; but he was taken before eight o'clock the next morning, in bed at a friend's house in Moorfields. When about fourteen of the conspirators had escaped, the soldiers arrived, and captured the remainder of the party—nine prisoners—and their arms and ammunition.

On the publication of the *Gazette*, the next morning, with the proclamation of the reward for the apprehension of Thistlewood, London was thrown into consternation, from the natural supposition that this plot was but the first movement of a great insurrection. But there is no evidence that it ever extended beyond the few desperate men who were immediately concerned in it. The vigilance of the government and the magistracy throughout the kingdom detected no more schemes of rebellion, though there were flying rumours from time to time of marches of armies of Radicals, who were to burn the towns and overturn the throne. Those who are old enough to have a distinct recollection of those times are astonished now to think how great was the panic which could exist without any evidence at all; how prodigious were the Radical forces which were always heard of but never seen; how every shabby and hungry-looking man met on the road was pronounced 'a Radical;' how country-gentlemen, well armed, scoured the fields and lanes, and met on heaths to fight the enemy who never came; and how, even in the midst of towns, young ladies carried heavy planks and

ironing boards, to barricade windows, in preparation for sieges from thousands of rebels, whose footfall was long listened for in vain through the darkness of the night. This imaginary state of the times was used by the alarmists as an argument against popular education (among other purposes to which it was turned); the plea being that the leaders of the Radicals, having circulated proclamations, must be able to write; and that this fact sufficiently proved the necessity of keeping the discontented dumb.

On the next Sunday, February 27th, the ministers publicly returned thanks for their preservation, in the Chapel Royal, St. James's. The king, who was at Brighton, recovering from his dangerous illness, was supplied daily with a minute account of the proceedings in regard to the conspirators. What he heard seems to have failed to convince him of the true causes and extent of the treasonable schemes of the day; for in the speech delivered by commission previous to the dissolution of parliament, on the 13th of March, the following notice is taken of the recent disturbances: 'Deeply as his majesty laments that designs and practices such as those which you have been recently called upon to repress, should have existed in this free and happy country, he cannot sufficiently commend the prudence and firmness with which you directed your attention to the means of counteracting them. If any doubt had remained as to the nature of those principles by which the peace and happiness of the nation were so seriously menaced, or of the excesses to which they were likely to lead, the flagrant and sanguinary conspiracy which has lately been detected must open the eyes of the most incredulous, and must vindicate to the whole world the justice and expediency of those measures to which you thought it necessary to resort, in defence of the laws and constitution of the kingdom.'

On the 20th of April, Thistlewood was condemned to death, after a trial of three days; and on the 1st of May, he and his four principal accomplices were executed. Five more who pleaded guilty had their punishment commuted to transportation for life; and one, who appears to have been present at Cato Street without being aware of the object of the meeting, received a free pardon. The question

which must next occur to every one is, what became of Edwards?

He was never punished; and to what extent he was rewarded has never been certainly known. That, after having been at the point of starvation, he was soon able to assist Thistlewood with 'some pounds' at need, is known; and that some of the conspirators attributed their treason to his instigation; and that he went about, giving away hand-grenades and divers weapons of atrocious device, and endeavouring to persuade many persons to blow up the House of Commons; and that he was not brought forward as a witness in the trials of the conspirators, nor himself ever arrested as a participator in their designs. On the day after the execution of Thistlewood, Alderman Wood brought forward a motion in the House, in regard to the conduct of this man; and renewed the subject on the 9th of May, adducing depositions from many persons which had been brought before him in his magisterial capacity, charging Edwards with the promulgation of horrible schemes for the destruction of the ministers and the parliament, and with many direct attempts to seduce needy men to join in those schemes. The information further showed that he had then been living for six weeks in great affluence, under an assumed name, in the house of a schoolmaster, in St. George's, Hanover Square, his host having no idea, till informed by Edwards himself, whom he was harbouring. No permission, however, was given by government for justice to overtake this wretch. The ministerial members enlarged on the necessity of employing such agency for government purposes in critical times; drew nice distinctions between the offices of spy and informer; disputed about the amount of Edwards's new affluence; ridiculed Alderman Wood, and his supposition that the home office would proceed against Edwards on the depositions furnished to Lord Sidmouth by magistrates; and finally negatived the motion for a select committee, to inquire into the conduct of this acknowledged traitor. From that time, Edwards disappeared; and nothing more was heard of him but an occasional rumour that he was living in Ireland, or on the continent, in ease and affluence. He escaped punishment from the hands of man; but his

case was so flagrant and so universally understood, that probably no one of the meanest of the sufferers from poverty and ignorance whom he endeavoured to seduce would have exchanged conditions with him, loaded as his name was with infamy, and his soul with the doom of his victims.

In Scotland, an outbreak occurred this spring. At the end of March, a vague alarm began to spread, of some approaching disturbance; and the peaceable work-people were visited by commands, from unknown quarters, to cease their work. On Sunday, April 2nd, a treasonable proclamation was found posted up on the walls all through Glasgow, inviting the people to effect a revolution, and commanding a cessation of all labour. On the Monday morning, everybody stood idle, to see what was going to happen; all, except the people of some cotton-mills, who went to work as usual, but dared not return after breakfast. Nothing ensued, except the calling out of the military and the preparations of the magistracy for defence against some attack of whose nature they were, and ever remained, entirely ignorant; for the alarm continued a mystery. Two days afterwards, one of the Stirlingshire Yeomanry was met, near Kilsyth, by a party of armed men, who demanded his weapons. Some shots were exchanged, and the man returned to Kilsyth. A detachment of twenty men was immediately sent out to scour the roads; and they found a party of rebels, about fifty in number, posted on some high ground in Bonnymuir. The rebels made some resistance, but were soon overpowered, some being wounded, and nineteen made prisoners. It appeared that most of these poor creatures had been tempted hither from Glasgow, in the expectation of joining an army of four or five thousand men, who were to take the Carron Ironworks, and thus supply themselves with artillery. On the side of the authorities, no death was caused but that of a horse; but the commanding-officer and three of his party were wounded. This is the affair which goes by the name of the Battle of Bonnymuir. Numerous arrests were made, in various parts of Scotland; but the excitement caused was not great, and soon at an end. In a few days, everybody was at work again, as if nothing had happened; and

the trials, which took place in July and August, engaged little attention. Of the persons convicted, all were pardoned except three; of these, two had been active at Bonnymuir, and the third was one of those reckless agitators who were, at that time, the curse of the suffering classes of society.

It was while the Cato-Street conspirators were lying in prison that the leaders of the Manchester movement—Hunt and his companions—underwent their trial, and received sentence. The intervening months had done much to undeceive some of Hunt's followers as to the character of their leader, and the prospects of any cause intrusted to such hands.

In the close intercourse of imprisonment and preparation for trial, Hunt lost all the attributes of the hero, with which the credulous imaginations of his admirers had invested him when he played the orator. One of these, his fellow-prisoner, declares that he could not endure to entertain an unworthy opinion of any of his comrades, and least of all of him who occupied such a position as Hunt's. 'I deemed all reformers as good as myself,' declares Bamford; 'and I knew that I could answer for the sincerity and disinterestedness of my own intentions. It was not until years had elapsed, that observation and reflection enabled me to penetrate the mist which had so long enveloped me; then it was that I became aware of the real nature of past transactions, and of the character of some who had been my political friends and fellow-workers in the cause of reform.' The evidence was pretty clear in the case of Hunt, as soon as he was lodged in Lancaster Castle, where he 'gave way to fits of impatience because no one appeared to bail him;' 'generally made use of the strongest terms he could, at the moment, command;' and showed 'exhibitions of violent feeling.' In London, it appeared that 'he became annoying and offensive, and his best friends were sometimes compelled to defend themselves by not being at home.' On his return from Lancaster to Manchester, as he sat 'on the box-seat,' the hero of the procession, there was that in his manners which made his ingenuous admirer 'almost doubt whether he who loved himself so well, could ever really love his

country for its own sake.' 'Hunt continually doffed his hat, waved it lowly, bowed gracefully, and now and then spoke a few kind words to the people; but if some five or ten minutes elapsed without a huzza or two, or the still more pleasing sounds: "Hunt for ever!" he would rise from his seat, turn round, and cursing poor Moorhouse in limbs, soul, or eyes, he would say: "Why don't you shout, man? why don't you shout? Give them the hip!"' When the hurrah was produced by the 'hip' of the panting and hoarse subaltern behind, 'he would resume his seat, and the bowing and hat-waving went on as before.' On the trial, when the defence was to begin in the afternoon, by which time the audience might probably be weary, Hunt reveals himself again to the humbler defendants: '"Now, Bamford, I'll tell you what you must do, if called this afternoon; you must talk against time."—"Talk against time! what's that?"—"You must talk to put on time, in order to prevent them from calling upon me, under any circumstances, to-night."' Then came the denouncing in court of his friend Carlile, at that time under punishment; and next—the worst thing' his admirer 'ever knew him do'—slandering Mrs. Thistlewood. Here was enough: the charm of the mob-orator was dissolved. 'At times I had some difficulty to avoid laughing in Hunt's face; at times I was vexed at being a party in such a piece of contemptible vanity. I contrasted all this glare and noise with the useful results of calm, sober thought, and silent determination; and I made up my mind that, when once out of this, I would not, in future, be a party in such trumpery exhibitions—in the unworthy setting up of the instrument instead of the principle of a great cause.' This is but a fair representation of the relation between the demagogue and his followers in all critical times of any state; and if such critical times cannot but arise in every state from the inevitable inequalities of human condition, those have much to answer for who, by needlessly abridging liberty of popular speech and action, stimulate the powers of the demagogue, and the passions of the simple and ignorant, who know of no better leader.

The simple-minded men who had followed Hunt were

surprised, when brought into the presence of the privy-council, at the actual appearance and manners of the rulers of the land, whom they had regarded as their cruel persecutors. They found no cruelty and ferocity in the faces and demeanour of the tyrants; the 'good-looking person in a plum-coloured coat, with a gold ring on the small finger of his left hand, on which he sometimes leaned his head,' while eyeing the prisoners—Lord Castlereagh; or the person who addressed them—Lord Sidmouth—'a tall, square, and bony figure, upwards of fifty years of age, with thin and rather grey hair, forehead broad and prominent,' and whose 'mild and intelligent eyes' looked forth from 'cavernous orbits;' his 'manner affable, and much more encouraging to freedom of speech than' had been expected. Perhaps there was something of the same surprise on the other side. It certainly appears that the prisoners were treated with kindness and respect by the great men they had to deal with, from the home secretary to the police officials, when the parties were brought face to face. If they could have known each other better beforehand—their feelings, ideas, and interests—perhaps there would have been no Six Acts on the one hand, or Spa-fields and Manchester meetings on the other. As it was, the leaders and comrades of the discontented had to take their trial at York, on the 16th of this month of March, 1820; they were found guilty, and were to appear for judgment, in the Court of King's Bench, at the end of April. They were found guilty of unlawful assembling, for the purpose of moving and inciting to contempt and hatred of the government; and their sentences were various terms of imprisonment, in different jails, and the giving of large securities for future good behaviour. Hunt spent the next two years and a half in Ilchester jail, whence he sent forth incessant complaints of bad treatment—complaints which may fairly be considered as efforts, natural in such a man, to keep himself in the eye of the world, as his followers appear to have been satisfied with the usage they met with in their several places of confinement. Some of them learned certain lessons through the experience of their adventures which enlightened them as to the causes of social evils which they had hoped to remedy

by political action. They found on occasion of the trial that 'among us at York' 'the same really contemptible feeling of classism, the curse of England and Englishmen, and of Englishwomen also, existed in too great a degree among the witnesses. There were the "broad-cloth" and the "narrow-cloth" ones—the rich and the poor; and the former seldom sought opportunities for intercommunication with the latter, but rather shunned them.' The conclusion drawn is one which it is worth some suffering to arrive at: 'First of all, [for men] to respect themselves; next, to invite to a respectful equality by unoffending manners; and, thirdly, to assert their right position in society, by withholding the smallest deference to mere assumption. This would be quite sufficient without rudeness or noise to restore the natural balance of society.' Such conclusions arrived at by men whose action is a part of the history of their time, are a worthy subject of historical record.

One other trial, for the seditions of the preceding year, remained—that of Sir Charles Wolseley and a coadjutor, Mr. Harrison, for their conduct and speech at a meeting in favour of parliamentary reform, at Stockport, in July, 1819. The sentence was eighteen months' imprisonment, and the giving of securities at the expiration of the term.

With the new reign, new interests opened—interests so general, and admitting of such overt expression, that the spies and secret agitators who had, of late, become the curse of the country, found themselves driven from their diabolical game. They are not traceable among the scenes and movements which were now to engross the mind of the nation, and fix the attention of the world.

CHAPTER II.

Accession of George IV.—Position of the Queen—King's Marriage in 1795—The Queen Abroad—The Queen's Return—King's Message—Queen's Message—Commission agreed to—Lords' Report—Queen's Trial—The Defence—Abandonment of the Bill—The Queen's Law-officers—Prorogation—The Queen goes to St. Paul's—Her Claim to be Crowned—Her Death and Funeral.

THE one thing that men said to each other, in England and abroad, when they heard the news of the death of George III., was, that never had there been an accession to the throne more merely nominal. The new king had virtually reigned for eight years; his opinions and character, in the office of ruler, were well known; and there would be no change of ministry. There would be a royal funeral, a public mourning, a new parliament, and a new regal title; and that would be all. This saying, which appeared a truism, turned out not to be exactly true.

The king having died on Saturday, January 29, 1820, the meeting of the privy-council took place on Sunday, when the new sovereign declared his accession, and took the oaths; and on Monday he was proclaimed. For some days he had been ill; and almost before his proclamation was over, he was in a state of great danger from inflammation of the lungs. During that week there was an expectation that this would prove the shortest reign in English history—the sharpest lesson ever given as to the nearness of the throne to the grave; but after a struggle of nine days, the disease was overcome, and the business of a new reign proceeded.

The demise of the crown having happened during the parliamentary recess, the two Houses, in obedience to the bidding of the law in such cases, met immediately—that is, on the Sunday, when the Lords were sworn in. The Commons had to wait till Monday, for the return to town of the lord high-steward. After the administration of the oaths, both Houses adjourned to

the day after the royal funeral, which was to take place on the 16th of February. During this interval, while people in the streets were talking of the singular quietness and absence of change under this new reign, so that the resignation of ministers had been a mere form, those ministers were in daily expectation of being dismissed by their sovereign, while their heads were in hourly danger from Thistlewood and his gang, whose quarrel with them was as holders of the offices which they believed themselves about to vacate.

The king, while yet suspended, as it were, over the grave, was planning to begin life anew. He required peremptorily from his ministers that they should procure him a divorce; and they, unable to endure the idea of such a scandal, positively refused. On the 13th of February, Lord Sidmouth, in a note to Earl Talbot, in apology for not having written sooner, said: 'If you knew how the day was passed, you would not be surprised at the omission. The government is in a very strange, and, I must acknowledge, in a precarious state.' The ministers remained in office by a compromise on this point which afterwards cost them dear. They induced the king to drop the subject by pointing out the advantage of the queen remaining quietly abroad, which she would no doubt do if impunity from divorce were granted her on that condition; and they readily promised to gratify the king's wishes, if she should return to give any trouble. When they gave this promise, they little understood the woman they had to deal with, or the disposition of the English people to succour and protect the unhappy and oppressed, irrespective of the moral merits or demerits of the sufferer.

No pity can be too deep for the misfortunes of all the parties involved in the unhappy marriage which the king was now bent on having dissolved. In the early days when the young Prince of Wales had a heart which might have expanded and warmed under happy domestic influences, his feelings were cruelly dealt with; he was under the common doom of English princes, forbidden to marry where he loved. He was not gratified in his natural wish to travel abroad, where he might possibly

have seen some lady included within the provisions of the Royal Marriage Act whom he might have loved. He knew himself to be disliked by his parents; and it was almost inevitable that he should seek solace in an illicit love, and in extravagant pleasures. He loved Mrs. Fitzherbert; and plunged into debt so deep that it caused parliament two months' debate to settle how he should be extricated. By this debate, and some misunderstandings about his debts, his feelings were exasperated; and it was in a spirit of recklessness that he agreed to marry somebody—anybody—chosen for him by the king. He looked upon his marriage as a state necessity, and as an unavoidable method of getting his debts paid.. The king decided that he should marry the Princess Caroline of Brunswick, the second daughter of the king's sister; and commands were sent to Lord Malmesbury, at Hanover, to repair to Brunswick, to ask the Princess Caroline in marriage for the Prince of Wales. No discretion was allowed to Lord Malmesbury—no time for observation—no opportunity for making any cautionary representations. All was considered settled before the negotiator saw the poor young creature who thought herself the most fortunate of princesses. 'All the young German princesses had learned English, in hopes of being Princess of Wales.' The tale of this courtship read now, after the event, is truly sad. The gay flights of the young bird before going into the net, and the closing down of her fate upon her, make the heart ache. 'The Princess Caroline much embarrassed,' says the Earl of Malmesbury in his diary, 'on my first being presented to her; pretty face—not expressive of softness—her figure not graceful. . . . . Vastly happy with her future expectations. The duchess [the mother] full of nothing else—talks incessantly.' If this duchess could, for a single moment, have seen what she had to answer for in her miseducation of her daughter, it might have made her dumb with grief and shame, instead of talkative with triumph; but she was not a woman who could feel responsibility. She was no more able to think and feel on behalf of her daughter, than her brother, the King of England, on behalf of his son; and the wretchedness of their children in marriage was, therefore, assured

beforehand. As for the father, the Duke of Brunswick, 'he entered fully into her future situation—was perfectly aware of the character of the prince, and of the inconveniences which would result, almost with equal ill effect, either from his liking the princess too much or too little. He said of his daughter: "Elle n'est pas *bête*, mais elle n'a pas de jugement—elle a été élevée sévèrement, et il le falloit."—(She is no fool; but she has no judgment. She has been severely brought up; and it was necessary.) He desired me to advise her never to show any jealousy of the prince.' As for this severity of training, Lord Malmesbury certainly thought less well of the method than those who had adopted it. He says: 'If her education had been what it ought, she might have turned out excellent: but it was that very nonsensical one that most women receive—one of privation, injunction, and menace.' And how had it issued. Her father observes, 'that his daughter writes very ill, and spells ill, and he was desirous that this should not appear.' 'Princess Caroline very *missish* at supper. I much fear these habits are irrecoverably rooted in her. She is naturally curious and a gossip; she is quick and observing, and she has a silly pride of finding out everything.' 'Argument with the princess about her toilet. She piques herself on dressing quick; I disapprove this. She maintains her point. I, however, desire Madame Busche to explain to her' what a neat toilet is. 'She neglects it sadly, and is offensive from this neglect.' 'It is remarkable how amazingly, on this point, her education has been neglected, and how much her mother, although an Englishwoman, was inattentive to it.' While such was her training, her natural qualities were good; and if they had had fair scope in private life, would have made her happy and beloved. 'Next to Princess Caroline at table,' says the diarist. 'She improves very much on a closer acquaintance; cheerful, and loves laughing.' On board ship, 'impossible to be more cheerful, more accommodating, more everything that is pleasant, than the princess; no difficulty, no childish fears, all good-humour.' A pregnant remark in this diary strikes the reader now as the sentence of her doom. 'Walk with Sir B. Boothby. We regret the apparent facility of the Princess Caroline's character,

want of reflection and *substance;* agree that with a *steady* man she would do vastly well, but with one of a different description there are great risks.' And while the Princess was 'vastly happy with her future expectations,' the King of England was writing to her mother that he hoped his niece would not have too much liveliness, and that she would lead a sedentary and retired life. 'These words shock the Princess Caroline,' Lord Malmesbury says. She heard of some other things, too, which had a sobering effect: 'It put a curb on her desire for amusement—a drawback on her situation, and made her feel that it was not to be all one of roses.'

How wretched it was to be, was too plain in a moment to the only witness of the first interview, Lord Malmesbury. The princess kneeled, as she had been instructed, and the prince raised her 'gracefully enough.' He instantly left her; and before she had seen any other member of the family, vented to the queen his dislike of the young stranger, whom he was to make his wife in three days. She, meantime, left thus alone, 'was in a state of astonishment,' and inquired whether the prince was always like this. She had but too much reason to know soon that, to her, he was to be always like this. Meantime, she found him very fat, and not nearly so good-looking as his portrait. Her only friend in England reports, that 'she was disposed to further criticisms on this occasion, which would have embarrassed me very much to answer, if luckily the king had not ordered me to attend him.' A more desolate creature than he left behind him never claimed pity from the lowliest who has any one to love.

The marriage ceremony took place three days after. Lord Malmesbury records that 'the prince was very civil and gracious; but I thought I could perceive he was not quite sincere, and certainly unhappy; and as a proof of it, he had manifestly had recourse to wine or spirits.'

Such was the marriage which the husband desired, as soon as he became king, to have dissolved. From the beginning he had attached his wife by no conjugal qualities; he had never respected her rights, or considered her

feelings; and it was, doubtless, a great relief to both when she went abroad to live—a step which she had taken some years before, in 1814. Careless as he had been of her rights and her feelings, he watched her conduct; and when rumours spread of infidelity on her side, he sent abroad, in 1818, a commission to collect evidence, and to observe her proceedings. It is not to be wondered at, if one who could not be made to understand anything of feminine reserve or royal dignity while yet in her father's house, should lay herself open to the criticism, both of enemies and ordinary observers, when her womanly feelings had, for a course of years, been outraged, and her genial affections repressed; when she had been long deserted by her husband, and separated from her child. Abroad, she escaped from the heartless set among whom she was doomed to dwell at home; and she enjoyed, the more by contrast, the freedom of continental manners. Whatever might be the truth about the extent of her indiscretions, her freedom was certainly more than her chief enemy, her husband, chose to permit. Their only child was dead, and now he was eager to render himself free for another marriage.

The wife was not unprepared for the persecution which now awaited her; for she had had more than one taste of it already. She had been sent to reside at Blackheath, in her early marriage-days, in a sort of court banishment; and there her most trivial proceedings were watched, and, at length, her servants were brought up before the Lords charged with the 'delicate investigation,' and closely examined, without any previous warning to their mistress or themselves. She was declared innocent of all serious offence; and the king, her father-in-law, would have invited her to court; but her husband would not hear of such an atonement. According to all the testimony of the time, she conducted herself extremely well under these trying circumstances.

Mr. Perceval was her adviser at that time; and at that time he made a mistake very injurious to her and to himself. He collected and had printed all the documents connected with the 'delicate investigation,' probably in the hope of damaging the prince and his friends; but he

presently perceived that the step would injure no one more than the woman whose name had already been so cruelly abused. A copy of 'the book,' as it was called, was stolen off his table one day; and he had to pay bribes to the amount of £10,000 before he could be sure of its being suppressed. The wisest thing the princess could now have done, would have been to remain on the spot where she had been justified. But her life was intolerably irksome to her; and she went abroad in 1814, against the advice of her friends, in the hope of breathing more freely. But a watch was set on her there too. Sir John Leach, first law-adviser to the prince, declared that in order to prepare for a divorce suit, certain competent persons should be sent to Italy, to collect evidence there against the princess; and a commission was accordingly appointed, under the sanction of Lords Eldon and Liverpool, to carry on another 'delicate investigation'—but this time without the knowledge of the accused. It was this Milan commission which supplied the evidence on which, at last, the prosecution proceeded; evidence which was scouted by the common sense and decency of all England.

As the time approached when the princess was likely to become Queen of England, indications were given of the treatment she would receive at that crisis. Our ambassadors abroad were instructed to prevent her admission at foreign courts, by refusing to countenance any such admission. They were not to afford her any official reception, or recognition whatever; and at home, the last insult was offered her, by the omission of her name from the liturgy, when that of her husband took its place there as king. But for this, she might probably have remained abroad, and given no further trouble. The ministers consented to this omission; and thereby destroyed the effect of their compromise with the king. Their object was to avoid the scandal of a public prosecution, which they were aware would bring the crown into contempt; and yet to avoid recognising her as a queen who could preside over a court. They did not know the spirit of the English people, or they would have seen that the crown could not be more degraded than by the persecution of a woman, by excluding her from the public prayers of the nation. By this act,

they at once created that peculiar interest which is beautifully indicated by the saying of Mr. Denman, that if she had her place in the prayer-book at all, it was in the prayer for 'all that are desolate and oppressed.' The news of this insult reached her in Italy; and she immediately wrote to Lord Liverpool, to demand the insertion of her name in the liturgy, and announce her intention of returning to England.

She came. The ministers were bound by their promise to the king to obtain a divorce. 'Her promptitude and courage,' observes Mr. Ward, 'confounded her opponents, and gained her the favour of the people. Whatever one may think of her conduct in other respects, it is impossible not to give her credit for these qualities.' There seemed to be nothing left for her to do but to throw herself upon the hearts of the people of England, unless she chose to acquiesce in an imputation of infamy. In Rome, the guard of honour appropriated to her as Queen of England, was refused to her by Cardinal Gonsalvi, on the ground of her non-recognition at home. The Emperor of Austria had before declined receiving any kind of visit from her; and she found herself an outcast wherever any intercourse with the British court existed. She had no course but to admit herself guilty, or come home, and meet the consequences.

The first queenly honours she received were from the garrison of Dover, whose commandant, having been served with no order to the contrary, of course offered the customary salute. Her landing took place on Tuesday, the 6th of June. An immense multitude, in holiday-dress, received her with acclamations, when she set foot on English ground, after an absence of six years. An address was presented to her by the inhabitants of Dover, that evening; and her reply, which pleased them, flew over the country, which was eager to catch her first words. She declared herself happy to find herself again in the bosom of a noble and generous nation; and expressed her hope that the time would come when she should be permitted to do what she could to promote the happiness of her husband's subjects. Her journey to London, and her progress through the streets, were one continued triumph; and the shouts of the multitude who thronged Pall Mall must have

been heard through every corner of the palace where her husband sat meditating his plans for her degradation. His mind could not have been more full of the contemplation than was that of almost every subject in his kingdom. 'This scandalous history,' writes Mr. Ward, just after that time, 'holds *entire* possession of men's minds, to the discredit, as well as the disadvantage of the country. Brougham's proposition, yesterday, seems a reasonable one, that certain days should be set apart for transacting the real business of the country.' The 'discredit,' the immoral influence, the obstruction to the public business, are imputable to the king, and those who had pledged themselves to support his proceedings, and who had driven a desolate creature so hard that she could not but turn to meet her pursuers. Lord Eldon talked of his conscience, as usual; while its operation seemed rather extraordinary to observers like Lord Dudley, in whose letters we find a remark on 'the example of the present lord chancellor, who, having kept her conscience then, keeps her offended husband's now—and all for the public good!'

From the moment of the announcement of the queen's approach, the cabinet councils had been frequent and protracted. The ministers met twice in a day, and remained in consultation for hours. While the multitude on the beach at Dover were shouting their welcome, the king was going in state to the House of Lords, which was unusually crowded, to give the royal assent to several bills already passed by his new parliament; and, after he had withdrawn, the expected communication from him was read by the lord chancellor from the woolsack. By this royal message, the king commended to the Lords an inquiry into the conduct of the queen, in order to the adoption of 'that course of proceeding which the justice of the case, and the honour and dignity of his majesty's crown, may require.' Lord Liverpool then laid on the table the green bag, which contained the papers criminatory of the queen. Lord Castlereagh offered the green bag, and read the king's message to the other House. The Lords received the communication in silence, and adjourned, understanding that their address, in reply to the message, should be considered the next day. In the House of Commons,

there was some vehement speaking; and before Lord Castlereagh moved the address, the next day, Mr. Brougham read to the House a message from the queen, declaring that her return to England was occasioned by the necessity her enemies had laid upon her of defending her character; declaring that, for the fourteen years which had elapsed since she was first accused, she had steadily required the justice of a full investigation of her conduct; and demanding now a public inquiry, instead of that secret investigation before a select committee which was proposed by the ministers. 'She relies,' said the message, 'with full confidence upon the integrity of the House of Commons, for defeating the only attempt she has any reason to fear.'

Mr. Brougham took the management of the queen's business as her attorney-general. He had been recognised in this office, as Mr. Denman was in that of solicitor-general to the queen in the Court of Chancery, the Vice-chancellor's Court, and the Court of King's Bench, on the 20th of April preceding. Mr. Brougham had met the queen in France, on her approach; and from this time, her affairs were under the guidance of himself and Mr. Denman. They were her commissioners, as the Duke of Wellington and Lord Castlereagh were those of the king, in the negotiation which was now entered upon, after the appointment of the secret committee of inquiry in the House of Lords, in the hope of obviating the painful and demoralising investigation which had been proposed to both Houses of parliament.

It was the queen who, after a pause, first proposed this negotiation. As a preliminary step, she required and obtained full assurance that her doing so could not be interpreted as an act of quailing or retreat. The commissioners met, and agreed on the basis of their negotiation —that the queen should not be held to admit, nor the king to retract, anything. Of course, the failure of the negotiation was included in the very terms of this basis. The queen was willing to live abroad; and the king would agree to drop all proceedings against her; but she required two things which the king's commissioners refused to grant—the insertion of her name in the liturgy, or some equivalent which would save her honour; and a

reception at foreign courts beseeming her rank. She would even have been satisfied with such a reception at some one foreign court, where she would fix her abode. On the king's part, it was offered that at some one foreign court it should be officially notified that she was legally Queen of England; leaving the question of her reception or exclusion to the pleasure of that court. As all the world knew that she was legally Queen of England, and as her exclusion from all foreign courts would inevitably follow from the discountenance at home, this proposal was naturally regarded by herself and her advisers as a mockery; and the negotiation was, on the 19th of June, announced to parliament to have failed.

It was now clear that the investigation must proceed. Some attempts were made by the House of Commons, on the motion of Mr. Wilberforce, to stop it, by entreating the queen, under the assurance of the protection of her honour by the Commons, to yield the point of the insertion of her name in the liturgy; but the deputation who waited on her for the purpose of presenting the entreaty were groaned at by the crowds in the street, and the queen's courteous refusal was acceptable to the people. These proceedings were of benefit to her cause, and her position was now much improved. Her recognition as Queen of England was avowed by the transactions of the commission; and next, the protection of the House of Commons had been tendered to her, in lieu of justice, and had been declined. She was now, in the eyes of the whole world, a queen, a claimant for justice, as well as an accused woman, summoned to trial. On the motion of Lord Castlereagh, the House of Commons, on Monday, June 26th, adjourned the business of the green bag and the royal message to Friday, July 7th, that it might be seen whether the Lords would in the meantime institute any proceedings. It would be indecent and inconvenient if the two Houses should be pursuing the same investigation at the same time. The Upper House was the fitter one for the business; and the Commons were anxious to avoid meddling with it till they should be called upon to consider any bill sent down to them by the Lords.

The secret committee of the Lords made its report on

the 4th of July. The report declared that the evidence affecting the honour of the queen was such as to require, for 'the dignity of the crown, and the moral feeling and honour of the country,' a 'solemn inquiry,' which might 'be best effected in the course of a legislative proceeding, the necessity of which,' the committee declared, 'they cannot but most deeply deplore.' The queen the next day declared, by petition to the Lords, her readiness to defend herself, and prayed to be heard by counsel, in order to detail some weighty matters, which it was necessary to state in preparation for the inquiry. Her petition was refused; and Lord Liverpool proceeded to propose the Bill of Pains and Penalties, which is the everlasting disgrace of his administration. The bill was entitled: 'An Act to deprive Her Majesty, Queen Caroline Amelia Elizabeth, of the title, prerogatives, rights, privileges, and exemptions of Queen-consort of this realm, and to dissolve the marriage between His Majesty and the said Caroline Amelia Elizabeth.' It charged the queen with improper and degrading conduct generally, during her residence abroad, and particularly with an adulterous connection with a menial servant, named Bartolomeo Bergami; and provided for her degradation and divorce. It was read a first time, and copies were ordered to be sent to the queen, and to her attorney and solicitor-general. The next day, her majesty offered to the House of Lords her protest, and a renewed prayer to be heard by counsel. Her counsel were called in, and instructed to confine themselves to the subject of the mode of procedure under the bill. The substance of their demand was that the whole business, if not dropped, should be proceeded with, without any delay, to a final issue. Mr. Brougham declared that her majesty 'was clamorous' for this.

The second reading of the bill was fixed for the 17th of August; and it was at this stage that the attorney-general adduced the charges on the part of the crown, and followed them up by the testimony of witnesses. From this day to the 8th of September, the House of Lords was occupied with the testimony offered on behalf of the bill. And it was not only that House that was thus occupied. Nothing else was heard of throughout the country—one might

almost say throughout Europe. From day to day, indecent tales were told by a party of Italian domestics—tales such as, at other times, are only whispered by the dissolute in private, and are never offered to the eye or ear of the moral and modest who compose the bulk of the English nation. These tales were now translated by interpreters at the bar of the House of Lords, given in full in the newspapers, and spread through every town, hamlet, and lone house within the four seas. The advisers of the king said much of what the queen had done for the tainting of public morals and the degradation of the dignity of the crown; but it was plain to most people then, and is to every one now, that nothing that it was in her power to do, if she had been all that her prosecutors declared, could have so injured public morals and degraded the crown as the king's conduct in pursuit of his divorce. If he had obtained it, it would have been at the cost of a responsibility towards his people, the weight of which could have been borne by no man worthy to occupy a throne.

That such a responsibility was duly felt by the sovereign we have no evidence. That his ministers were truly wretched at this time, we know from the correspondence of some of them which has since been published to the world; but they ascribed their suffering to the supposed disloyalty and changed temper of the English people; and do not appear to have been at all sensible that any blame attached to the government. The lord chancellor writes to his correspondents of his success in preserving the peace of his conscience, and receives his unpopularity as an honourable martyrdom. When he went down to his country-seat at Encombe, the people, even in his own neighbourhood, shouted into his coach: 'Queen Caroline for ever!' When the queen's friends were negotiating for a house for her, next to his, he never doubted that it was 'for the express purpose of annoying me;' and cleverly bought it up, without much danger of too large a sacrifice. 'The purchase-money is large, but I have already had such offers, that I shall not, I think, lose by it.' He 'had a teasing day,' when the queen's first petition was presented to the Lords: the queen sent to him to say she was coming; and he replied that he could

not, as speaker, admit ladies during the debates without leave. Then he declined to deliver a message from her; and then her petition; and for this last, he says, 'Messrs. Grey, Lansdowne, and Holland, abused me pretty handsomely.' While his family and friends were guarding him down to the house, the people beset the house of Alderman Wood, the queen's host, and were on the watch in the Parks for the queen's drives, to take her horses from her carriage, and draw her in triumph; and the illuminations in her honour put the lord chancellor's windows in danger. When Lords Sidmouth and Castlereagh were walking arm in arm down Parliament Street, amidst the groans and hisses of the mob, Lord Sidmouth observed: 'Here we go, the two most popular men in England.' 'Yes,' replied Lord Castlereagh, 'through a grateful and admiring multitude.' A political friend and former colleague of Lord Sidmouth writes to him at this time: 'I cannot describe to you how grievously I suffer, and have suffered, on account of the dangerous and deplorable situation in which our country, the king's government, indeed, all of us, have been so long placed—a situation out of which, I profess, I see no satisfactory, indeed, no safe deliverance. To which Lord Sidmouth's reply is: 'In venting your feelings, you have precisely expressed mine. All that just and honest pride which once gave comfort and dignity to a state of existence, in this country, is nearly cancelled and obliterated. I am, however, much more under the influence of indignation than of any feeling which approaches to despondency.' There was, in truth, in a different sense from that which the writer intended, no cause for despondency. There was no cause for despondency in seeing how strong were the feelings of loyalty in England, though they were at present directed towards a queen under prosecution, instead of a king on the throne. There was no cause for despondency in seeing how sound was the heart of the English people in regard to the weightier matters of the law—justice and mercy—strong as is the tendency generally to visit such offences as those now in question more severely on women than on men. Though it was inevitably a question universally discussed, whether the person arraigned was guilty or not, the

sympathies of the people did not depend upon the answer. Those who regarded the queen as a wholly innocent victim, and those who believed her driven into guilt by her wrongs, joined hand in hand to draw her carriage, and strove who should cheer the loudest as she passed.

That summer is distinct in the memory of those who were then of mature age. It was a season of extreme heat. Horses dropped dead on the roads, and labourers in the fields. Yet, along the line of the mails, crowds stood waiting in the burning sunshine for news of the trial, and horsemen galloped over hedge and ditch to carry the tidings. In London, the Parks and the West-end streets were crowded every evening; and through the bright nights of July, neighbours were visiting one another's houses to lend newspapers or compare rumours. The king was retired within his palace, unable to come forth without danger of meeting the queen, or of hearing cheers in her favour. She had her two o'clock dinner-parties—'Dr. Parr and a large party'—now a provincial mayor—now a country baronet—now a popular clergyman—come up to tender his own homage and that of his neighbours; and then came the appearance to the people in an airing; and on other days, the going down to the House of Lords. Elsewhere were the Italian witnesses—guarded like a gang of criminals as they went to and fro; pelted and groaned at wherever they were seen; driven fast to back-doors of the House of Lords, and pushed in, as for their lives. Within the House, there was the earnest attention of the Lords to the summing-up of the solicitor-general (Copley), previous to the production of the witnesses, the rushing out to see the eclipse when the pith and marrow of the matter were disposed of, and the rushing back presently during the mingling of his voice at the close with the sound of 'the drums and flourish, announcing the queen's arrival;' and then, the reception of her majesty, all standing as she entered and took her seat, as hitherto, on 'the crimson chair of state, three feet from the bar;' and then the swearing in of the interpreter, and the introduction of the first witness—at whose entrance the queen was looking another way, but on perceiving whom, she uttered an inarticulate exclamation, and hastily retired.

She had nothing to fear from this witness, however; for his evidence was, on the face of it, so ludicrously untrustworthy, that his name, Majocchi, became a joke throughout the country. The poor wretch was an admirable theme for the mob outside, in the intervals between their exhortations to the guards, and the peers, and all who passed to the House, to 'remember their queen,' 'remember their sisters,' their 'wives,' their 'daughters.' Then there was the perplexity of underlings how to act. The sentinels at Carlton Palace, 'after a momentary pause, presented arms,' as her majesty's carriage passed: 'the soldiers at the Treasury did not.' Daily was the fervent 'God bless her!' repeated ten thousand times, from the nearest house-top to the furthest point of vision; and daily did the accused appear 'exhausted by fatigue and anxiety,' on returning from hearing, or being informed of, the disgusting charges, the time for replying to which had not yet arrived. Those who remember that July and August, when men's minds were fevered with passion or enthusiasm, and the thermometer was ranging from 80° to 90° in the shade, can always be eloquent about the summer of 1820.

On the 9th of September, her majesty's counsel applied for and obtained an adjournment to Tuesday, the 3rd of October. The defence consisted of attempts, generally successful, to overthrow the credit of the witnesses against the accused, and in bringing forward testimony in favour of her conduct and manners while abroad. On the 2nd of November, the arguments of counsel on both sides being concluded, the Lords proceeded to discuss the question of the second reading of the Bill of Pains and Penalties. The division was taken on Monday the 6th, when the majority in favour of the second reading was only 28, in a house of 218. On the third reading, which took place four days afterwards, the majority was reduced to 9. Such a result in this House, the stronghold of ministerial power, at once showed the government that it must yield; and that it would yield, 'considering the state of public feeling, and the division of sentiment just evinced by their lordships,' Lord Liverpool announced on the spot. The king's ministers had come to the determination not to proceed further with the measure.

The joy which spread through the country with the news of the abandonment of the bill was beyond the scope of record. Among the generality of persons, who did not look beyond the interest of the particular case, the escape of the queen was a matter of congratulation; but to this, persons of more reflection and a more comprehensive knowledge added a deeper joy. They felt as Lord Erskine did when he burst forth with his rejoicings, on the announcement of the abandonment of the bill: 'My life, whether it has been for good or for evil, has been passed under the sacred rule of the law. In this moment I feel my strength renovated by that rule being restored. The accursed change wherewithal we had been menaced has passed over our heads. There is an end of that horrid and portentous excrescence of a new law, retrospective, iniquitous, and oppressive; and the constitution and scheme of our polity is once more safe. My heart is too full of the escape we have just had, to let me do more than praise the blessings of the system we have regained.' In the midst of the enthusiasm, the law-officers of the queen became the idols of the nation. In the face of the world, they were the champions of an oppressed woman; and the thoughtful saw in them also the defenders of the constitution which the lord chancellor was daily talking about, but not at this time taking the best care of: the defenders of the dignity of law which, as Mr. Ward said on the present occasion, 'outsteps its just functions when it interferes to punish misconduct'—granting the guilt, for argument's sake—'that has been provoked by outrage, and facilitated by neglect.' And nowhere could there be a difference of opinion about the disinterestedness and courage of Mr. Brougham and Mr. Denman. Friend and foe could not but see how they exposed themselves to the displeasure of the court and government, and to all the consequences of that displeasure, for a term too long for calculation. There appeared every probability that they would suffer professionally for their advocacy of the queen's cause, through the present reign, and the one which was to succeed; for the Dukes of York and Clarence voted for the bill throughout its course. It is a cheering fact in human life that the oppressed, when once his grief is known, never has to wait

long for a champion. The work has never to wait for the workman, in the case of the defence of helplessness, any more than in other matters. And the honour due in each instance is not the less for the certainty that it will be claimed. These gentlemen suffered as they expected to do —suffered a long delay of their professional advancement and rewards; but they were not men who, in a free country, could be kept down by royal or official discountenance; and they received first the esteem and gratitude of the nation, and finally, the prizes of their profession. The occasion was one which, by its appeal to their highest feelings, could not but rouse their intellectual powers to the fullest action; and both of them surpassed all expectation in the conduct of the business. 'The display of his power and fertility of mind in this business,' says Mr. Ward of Mr. Brougham, 'has been quite amazing; and these extraordinary efforts seem to cost him nothing.'

Three nights of illumination in London, sanctioned by the lord mayor, followed the announcement of the triumph of the queen's cause. Prince Leopold, the son-in-law of both the royal parties, ordered Marlborough House to be illuminated; and no abode shone more brightly. The witnesses for the prosecution were burned in effigy in the streets; and there was some mobbing of the newspaper offices which had taken the government side in the question; but there was no serious breach of the peace.

On the 23rd, the queen sent down a message to the House of Commons, which Mr. Denman had begun to read, when he was stopped by the summons to the Commons to attend the House of Lords, which preceded the prorogation of parliament. The contents of the message were of course made known. Her majesty had declined offers of money and a residence, made by the government since the dropping of the prosecution; and she commended herself to the House of Commons, for a due provision, and for protection, in case of a resumption, under some other form, of the proceedings against her—an event strongly apprehended by herself, and by some others more fitted to exercise a cool judgment.

Addresses were presented to the queen, from all parts of the country, and almost all descriptions of people. On the

29th of November she went in procession to St. Paul's, to return thanks for her deliverance from a great peril and affliction. Her reception was everything that could be wished, as far as the conduct of the vast multitude was concerned; and they did honour to her by the utmost propriety of bearing; but, within the cathedral, we stumble upon an incident characteristic of that time, but scarcely credible in ours. 'In the general "thanksgiving," the officiating clergyman, Mr. Hayes, one of the minor canons of St. Paul's, omitted the particular thanksgiving which, at the request of any parishioner, it is customary to offer up, and which it was understood her majesty desired might be offered up for her on the present occasion. It is said that Mr. Hayes refused, on the ground that the rubric directs that those may be named as returning thanks who have been previously prayed for; but that the queen, not having been prayed for, could not be named in the thanksgiving.' Thus, the same interdict which deprived her of the prayers of the nation, wrought to prevent her from returning thanks—a privilege which is commonly supposed to be the right of every worshipper within the Christian pale.

The life of this unhappy lady offers but little more for record; for the life itself was drawing to a close. When parliament met again, the time of the nation was largely occupied, and its temper tried, by discussions on the queen's affairs, caused by her continued exclusion from public prayers, and by recriminations on the inexhaustible subject of last year's prosecution. An annuity of £50,000 was provided for her, by act of parliament; and some attempts were made to obtain for her a share in the honours of the ensuing coronation. It was natural that one so long an outcast, and at length borne back into social life by the sympathies of a nation, should accept too much from those sympathies, and fail to stop at the right point in her demands. It would have been well if the queen had retired into silence after the grant of her annuity, and the final refusal to insert her name in the liturgy. Her demand to be crowned with the king, was, besides being properly untenable, far from prudent in regard to herself, or humane towards the king. He could

not meet her under such circumstances; and the being crowned was not essential to her womanly honour, which was now as much vindicated and protected as it could ever be. Whether the claim to be crowned was or was not a false step in prudence and taste, there can be no doubt that the endeavour to obtain an entrance to the Abbey, to witness the ceremony, was a mistake. The queen was fairly turned away from the door, amidst contending utterances of derision, sympathy, and indignation at the exclusion. It was a piteous sight; the personages 'on the leads,' 'in grotesque dresses,' drawn out of the procession to see the transaction; and the 'fashionable ladies,' all with tickets, no one stopping to offer hers to the pausing queen, but all hurrying on, 'without taking the slightest notice of her;' the people below, meantime, shouting her name 'with great enthusiasm.'

This was the last time of her giving trouble to her enemies, or perplexity to the fashionable who crossed her path, or smiles to the people whose hearts warmed towards her. She must have been often and long, if not perpetually, since the accession of the king, in a fever of spirits which could not but wear her frame. The tension of mind which she had now long undergone would have crazed most women, and could not be for ever sustained even by one of 'so little substance' and so much versatility as, following Lord Malmesbury's testimony to her early character, we may attribute to her still. Her mortification at the Abbey door happened on the 19th of July; on the 2nd of August a bulletin was issued, which showed that she was seriously ill of internal inflammation. She was in no condition to contend with disease, and, on the 7th, she sank. It is testified that she said, with a mournful earnestness, on that last day, that she had no wish to live: 'I do not know whether I shall have to suffer bodily pain in dying; but I shall quit life without any regret.' No wonder! And who could wish that she should live? At the best, her future years must have been forlorn. Supposing her conduct, and that of the people towards her, to have been all that could be wished, to the end of a long life, she would still have been a desolate being. To a woman it can never be enough to be a queen—much less

to be a nominal queen, under perpetual solicitude for the very name. That her long home opened to her thus early was an event of comfort to those who knew she could never have any other home, or any natural work or food for her domestic affections. Yet the news of her death—joyful enough to her husband, who was on a pleasure trip at the time—spread mourning over the land; and a countless multitude thronged to her funeral-procession. There were some riots on this occasion, caused by the determination of the people to have the hearse pass through the city; a point which they gained after some conflict with the soldiers, during which two men were killed by shots from the horse-guards on duty. After the lord mayor quitted the head of the procession, outside the city, the funeral company proceeded quietly enough to Harwich, where the body was immediately embarked for Stade, on its way to Brunswick. Times had changed since she arrived at the shores whence she thus departed; arrived, 'vastly happy with her future expectations,' with her prince's portrait in her bosom, and a place on the greatest throne in the world within her view. She had soon found her prince 'not nearly so good-looking as his picture;' and she found the same thing in regard to the 'prospects' about which she had been so 'vastly happy.' For her the grave could never open untimely; and we see it open, as she did, 'without any regret,' though not without sadness. She had just entered her fifty-third year.

We have finished the story of Queen Caroline at once, that we might not have to recur to it, with pain, at intervals. We must now revert to the beginning of the year, and the early transactions of the new reign.

CHAPTER III.

Dissolution and New Parliament—State of the Country—Death of Grattan—Education— Capital Punishments—Agricultural Distress —Parliamentary Reform—Catholic Claims—Constitutional Association—King's Visit to Ireland—Coronation—Death of Napoleon.

ON occasion of the death of the sovereign, it is usual for the parliament—which may remain in existence for six months, if the new king so please—to provide for the civil list, and all the exigencies of government during the coming elections, and then be dissolved. On the death of George III., there was some anxious questioning as to what should be done, on account of the peculiar condition of affairs. The time of parliament had, thus far in the session, been almost wholly occupied with legislating against the disaffected; and the business of the country remained to be done. It could hardly be gone through during the six months; and a six months' canvass for the elections would be a serious evil to the country. It was clearly convenient, therefore, that, as the king's speech declared, there should be a new parliament called without delay. But the king and government wanted money, and supplies must be voted immediately; or, these matters of the purse would be subject to the dictation of the people at the elections. The Commons voted the supplies; the Lords acquiesced in the vote, expressly dispensing with the act of parliament properly necessary on such an occasion. Two other subjects were discussed; the position of the queen, and the issue of writs to four boroughs, against which gross corruption had been proved. Lord J. Russell carried through the Commons a bill to prevent the issue of writs to these four boroughs of Grampound, Penryn, Barnstaple, and Camelford. The bill was lost, by a majority of eleven, in the Upper House; but the incident shows that the question of parliamentary reform was, by this time, able to command attention in the most critical seasons. On the 28th of February, the parliament was

prorogued, to be dissolved on the 13th of March; on the 21st of April the new parliament assembled to be sworn in; and on the 27th, the king opened the session in person.

His speech acquiesced in economy, and declared his contentment with the settlement of 1816, rather than that any addition should be made to the popular burdens. This sounded well, as the lord chancellor anticipated, in a letter written the day before, that it would: 'I think now the speech, in which he will disavow wishing for any increase, will make him popular; and, if times mend, will give him better chance of a fair increase of income than anything else could give him.' This declaration, however, was obtained with difficulty, from a prince who was always in pressing need of money. 'Our royal master seems to have got into temper again,' says the above letter; 'he has been pretty well disposed to part with us all, because we would not make additions to his revenue.'

The ministers might well, indeed, refuse 'to oppress the country at present, by additional taxation, for this purpose.' The country was in no state to be trifled with; and if the king had dismissed his ministers, he could hardly have found others who could have promised him an increase of income. The social disorders which had been occasioned by poverty, were in course of treatment by the harshest methods the constitution could be made to yield or countenance. The distress remained; and the agricultural complainants themselves declared that they did not seek relief at the expense of the manufacturing and commercial classes, who were as sorely tried as themselves. The jails were full of 'Radicals;' prosecutions for high treason, sedition, libel, and blasphemy, were going forward all over the country, keeping up the disloyal and defiant action of men's minds; the queen was hastening home to take refuge among the people, from the persecution of their rulers; men were hanged in rows, under a criminal law whose severity was now a common topic of discussion in the legislature itself; and, in this posture of affairs, the temper of the nation was not the blandest. It was good enough to let the elections pass over without violence; but not so easy as to bear any proposal for increasing the

royal income; so the king had to get 'into temper again,' and keep his ministers.

The parliament returned, amidst all this turmoil and distress, differed little in its composition from the last; if anything, the administration rather gained strength in it. In its first days, it lost one of its chief ornaments. Mr. Grattan had come up to parliament again, on behalf of the Catholics, though his infirmities rendered him unfit for public service. He arrived in London ill; never again entered the House; and told a deputation, who waited on him in May, that they would see him no more. He was then 'in the lowest state of physical exhaustion;' made a vain effort to rise; and here closed the efforts of a long and honest political life, dying on the 4th of June, after having spent forty-five years in the public service. He was missed and regretted, not only as a faithful patriot and an able man, but as the last of the band of orators bequeathed by the previous century to the present—the last of the extraordinary group of whom Pitt and Fox were the prominent members.

During this session, when many subjects of great and growing interest were brought forward—some in regular course, and some in consequence of the distress of the times—one mighty plea was urged, which some hearers thought irrelevant to the business of the time, while wiser men saw its close connection with every form of popular misery and national difficulty. This session was distinguished by Mr. Brougham's motion and speech on behalf of national education. Mr. Ward might well speak of Mr. Brougham's capacity for labour and versatility of powers. On the 24th of June, Mr. Lambton withdrew his notice of motion on parliamentary reform, for the 27th, on the ground that a subject so important could not be properly attended to by the House or the country at a time when the queen's business would engross all minds. Mr. Brougham then observed that, standing in the same situation with regard to his motion on national education, he should not withdraw it, as parliament and the country could have nothing more important to attend to. 'By the production of the plan which he was about to submit to parliament, he trusted that he should put it in the power of the House

to do a benefit to mankind, which would exist and be widely felt long after that question—the queen's business—should have been determined; and long after the differences which existed between individuals, illustrious as they were, who were more immediately connected with it, should have been forgotten.' On the 28th of June was brought forward the first comprehensive and definite proposal for the education of the people of Great Britain. As has been recorded in a previous page, an education committee had been sitting since 1816, by whose labours a great mass of valuable information—of moral statistics—had been collected and made available; and Mr. Brougham had, at that time, declared his intention of bringing forward a scheme of popular education for London, under parliamentary sanction and control, before attempting to diffuse instruction over the whole country. In his present move, he said nothing of this former intention, but proposed a plan for the education of the entire population of 'the poor in England and Wales.'

The plan proposed by Mr. Brougham was never adopted; but the movement was not lost. No plan of general education of the poor has yet been adopted, and it is still impossible to see when such an event will happen; but the facts obtained and made known, the attention excited, the conviction of the necessity of education produced in a multitude of minds, which yet cannot agree to any scheme hitherto brought forward, have been, in themselves, a sort of education, in preparation for a higher and a better; and these date from Mr. Brougham's efforts in 1816 and 1820. If we have still too many marks instead of signatures, in parish registers, the proportion is much smaller than it was; if we still find old gentlemen, here and there, who exhort against the 'over-instruction of the people,' and ladies who refuse to take domestic servants who can read and write, we rarely meet, in towns and in ordinary middle-class society, with those alarms about the effect of the alphabet and the inkhorn upon the poor, which were common when Mr. Brougham rose to plead their cause.

According to his statement, the children requiring means of education were about one-tenth of the whole

population in England; whereas those provided with any means of education at all were only one-sixteenth (according to the most recent census, it was one-seventeenth); and if the number was deducted of those who received merely a decent training in regard to habits, which was all that dame-schools and other inferior schools could afford, the amount of effectual teaching would be found to be indeed miserably small. Large districts were destitute of all means of instruction whatever: in others, the Sunday-schools of the Dissenters, who had carried out the plan of Sunday-schools much more vigorously than the Church, were the only reliance; and, good as are the principle and plan, no weekly meetings for instruction can ever impart any considerable amount of knowledge, or supply the place of that training of intellect and habits which is a main element in what is called education.

The information obtained by the education committee was altogether from clergymen of the Established Church; and Mr. Brougham's plan provided for the schoolmasters being all members of that church; for their being elected on the recommendation of clergymen, together with that of resident householders; and for their qualification for the office, by taking the sacrament within a month of their appointment. These were proposals which could not be acceded to by Dissenters; and which, therefore, necessitated the rejection of the scheme. No scheme of popular education can ever become national, in this country, which gives the management of schools and the appointment of masters to the Church, while Dissenters constitute a large proportion of the inhabitants in almost every district, and especially in the most populous, where the Dissenters bear their full share in such education as already exists. This difficulty was immediately fatal to the measure, and has been so to every scheme proposed through succeeding years; the members of the Established Church insisting on direct religious instruction, as a part of the plan; and the Dissenters refusing either to subject their children to the religious instruction of the Church, or to pay for a system from which their children are necessarily excluded. Whenever all parties shall consent to establish a system of secular instruction, providing for the religious training

to be carried on in perfect freedom by the clergy and ministers of the respective denominations, the nation may enjoy a scheme of general education; but, evidently, not till then. Mr. Brougham's measure was dropped, after the first reading of the bill; but it answered a great purpose in rousing the mind of the nation to the most important subject which could occupy it; and it will ever remain memorable as the first express move towards the greatest achievement which still remains to be effected. This session was, the while, affording evidence of the need of popular enlightenment, and of the educational training which is afforded by the free discussion of social interests. We find petitions presented, from country districts, complaining of the operation of machinery in throwing people out of work; and, on the other hand, a large number of petitions in favour of an extension of freedom of trade.

Something was gained this year, in the direction of a diminution of capital punishment, by Sir James Mackintosh's success, in carrying three bills out of six which he brought forward in the place of the lamented Sir S. Romilly. By the passage of these bills, shoplifting to the value of five shillings ceased to be punishable with death —great as was the lord chancellor's apprehension that, by this relaxation, small tradesmen would be ruined, in the face of the clearest evidence that the severity of the law caused that offence to go almost invariably unpunished. There is something amusing, and certainly instructive, in looking back, after a few years, upon the records of the fears of legislators. Lord Redesdale was, on this occasion, alarmed at the proposal that men should no longer be put to death for blackening their faces in the commission of theft by night. The offence of stealing game and other articles by night remained punishable by fine and transportation; it was proposed to repeal that portion of the Black Act by which night-thefts, with blackened faces, were made punishable with death. Lord Redesdale told of the tax he and his neighbours had to pay—£200 a year, for a police of six men—to check deer-stealing on the borders of the forest; and he declared his fear that if men, already deer-stealers, were no longer to be hanged for blackening their faces, 'the practice among these depre-

dators would be universally resorted to.' He was supported by the lord chancellor, who actually succeeded in throwing out that clause of the bill. From this time forward, however, it was no longer a capital offence for an Egyptian to remain one year in the country; for a notorious thief to reside in Northumberland or Cumberland; for any one to be found disguised in the Mint, or to injure Westminster Bridge. The vagrant laws were now to be supposed severe enough for gipsies; and the laws which protected the southern counties to be sufficient for the northern. By the third of the successful bills, which was carried with some mutilation, several offences—some serious, and some no more so than the wounding of cattle and the sending threatening letters—were reduced from capital to simple felonies. But in no case were the offences of stealing on navigable rivers, and even the lighter kinds of forgery, permitted to be visited with punishment short of death. The bills regarding these crimes were necessarily withdrawn; no further advance was made, for some sessions, in substituting milder punishments for that of death. Sir James Mackintosh continued his efforts, year by year; but could only work out some preparation for future success. In his attempt in regard to forgery, in the session of 1821, he committed a mischievous oversight in inserting the forgery of Bank of England notes among those which were to remain punishable with death, as the forgeries of wills, transfers of stock, and marriage registers and licences. He yielded this point, on the ground of the seriousness of the offence of forging bank-notes; but he thus gave up the strong ground that the capital punishment was less effective than a milder one for the prevention of the offence, and enabled his opponents to regard him as considering the severer punishment the best for its object. All that was gained for three years was a pledge from the House of Commons in the session of 1822: 'That this House will, at an early period of the next session of parliament, take into their most serious consideration the means of increasing the efficacy of the criminal laws, by abating their undue rigour.' This resolution was adopted by a majority of 16, in a House of 218; and the 'loud cheers' which followed the announcement excited much expectation

throughout the country, as to the fidelity with which the Commons would redeem their pledge on the arrival of the session of 1823.

The restlessness of the country under 'agricultural distress' was in these days a perpetual, as commercial distress was a frequently recurring evil. It might really puzzle a visitant from another hemisphere to understand how it could be that, with regard to an article of the first necessity —an article inevitably produced, because inevitably consumed—the producers should be, for long courses of years, distressed and impoverished. 'From the commencement of the session of parliament (1820), numerous petitions on the subject of the existing agricultural distress had been presented to the House, stating in strong language the extent of the evil, and imploring parliament to apply a remedy.' The remedy applied for was, the raising of prices by the creation of an artificial scarcity; a project which it could not be expected that the great body of bread-eaters would agree to. A committee of inquiry was obtained by a sort of accident—by a number of too-confident members of the House having gone home, instead of waiting till the debate closed at four in the morning; but the government, who did not choose to open again the question of the corn-laws, managed to limit the function of this committee to the inquiry, whether the averages were obtained correct, so as to afford reliable information as to the prices of corn abroad? In 1821, 'the agricultural distress of the present year was not inferior to that of 1820. No new causes of embarrassment had sprung up, but the price of corn still continued low;' landlords would not reduce their rents, and farmers had to pay their rents out of their capital. In 1822, 'the beginning of the present year was marked chiefly by the clamours of the farmers and landowners.' In 1823, 'the country exhibited the most unequivocal marks of a steady and progressive prosperity. Every branch of manufacturing industry was in a flourishing state.' Yet, though agriculture was in a somewhat less depressed condition, 'complaints were uttered, in various county-meetings held immediately before, or shortly after, the meeting of parliament.' These incessant groanings, wearisome to the ears, and truly distressing to

the hearts, of all listeners, were not borne away idly on the winds. They did not obtain from parliament the aid which the complainants desired, but they largely advanced the cause of parliamentary reform. If the agricultural interest had been in a state of high prosperity from 1820 to 1830, the great question of reform of parliament must have remained afloat much longer than it did, from the inertness or opposition of the agricultural classes; who, as it was, were sufficiently discontented with parliament to desire a change. Extraordinary as this may appear, when we regard only the preponderance of the landed interest in the House at that time, we shall find, on looking abroad through the country, that it was so. Such politicians as Cobbett presented themselves among the discontented farmers, and preached to them about the pressure of the debt, of a bad system of taxation, and a habit of extravagant expenditure; and of a short method of remedying these evils, by obtaining a better constituted House of Commons. It was no small section of the agricultural classes that assisted in carrying the question at last; and it would be interesting to know how many of that order of reformers obtained their convictions through the distress of these years.

Except by such advancement in political education as is wrought by adversity, and the discussion which it excites, the first year of the new king's reign cannot be called one of progress. No prosperity accrued to the people; and nothing was done by the government, which could redeem them from the odium of their proceedings in regard to the queen. The next session was more full of deeds and of promise, and some brightness of hope begins to dawn upon the dark scene of misrule and discontent in England. It was something that the question of parliamentary reform had now become so prominent as that three motions relating to it were discussed in the course of the session; besides that great meetings were held elsewhere, which kindled sentiment and stimulated discussion. Of these meetings, the most important was a dinner at the London Tavern, on the 4th of May, when speeches of great vigour were made by the leading reformers in the House of Commons, and when Dr. Lushington openly declared, and

clearly proved, that the way to every other reform was through an amended constitution of the legislature.

From this time may be dated the continuous and successful agitation of the reform question—an agitation which was one of the blessings of peace. It appears to be as true in regard to the life of a nation as of an individual, that in order to rise, morally and intellectually, it must be possessed by some great idea, in the pursuit of which its best powers must be appealed to and perseveringly exercised. As a man will never become worthy of his manhood who lives on from day to day, merely taking what comes, and neither endeavouring to raise his conceptions of what he might be, nor to live up to such notions as he has; so neither can a nation keep up any nationality which has no aims and no ideal. The herd who live under a despot may go on being a herd from generation to generation; they are not a nation, and not having national privileges, have no national duty. With those who live under a representative system, the case is widely different; they must rise morally, or they will sink politically; they cannot keep still, fold the hands to sleep, and leave the conduct of affairs to their rulers. It was the mistake of the government of Lords Liverpool, Sidmouth, Eldon, and Castlereagh, not to perceive this plain truth; and their not perceiving it was the cause, not only of their misrule, but of their despondency about the state of the nation. During the war, the nation were supplied with the idea of the time—from without, as it were; so that, to their short-sighted rulers, all appeared safe and well at home. The idea, in this case, was of the national preservation first, and its honour afterwards. It is the one only quality which makes war endurable, that it supplies a national idea at the time for the people's heart and mind to work up to; and it is the great curse of war—a heavier curse than its bloodshed, burnings, and cost of woe and wealth—that it engrosses a nation with an idea lower than it might have and ought to have, unless it be a struggle for existence or redemption. The English nation had now come out of a war; and, by the very constitution of the human mind, some great general aim must be presented for it to work up to. The government did not see the

necessity, and would, ignorantly and unconsciously, have dissolved the national unity, by requiring every man to subside into his own home and proper business, without entertaining any national ideas at all, till the next war should call up the whole people again to act as one man.

In accordance with this notion of theirs, the government set itself to repress and punish every movement of thought and speech which had any political aspiration in it. This brought out a more violent and ignorant thought, and a more desperate speech, till there were treason orations on hustings, and drilling on heaths, and diabolical murder-plots in stables; and the government regarded their charge, the nation, as sinking under an attack of moral and political plague. There was no fear, however; and the lesson offered by those times may serve to guide and cheer a future time, when a like crisis may occur, from however different causes. The necessary idea and consequent aim were sure to arise; and here, under this date, we see what they were. The nation aspired to improve its own life. Like a man who finds his indolence weakening him, his want of aim giving occasion to disorder among his passions, and his interior liberties wasting under this anarchy, and who rouses himself to contemplate the idea he once had of what he would be, and stimulates himself to overtake this ideal—the English nation now began to rouse itself for its immortal struggle to become the representative commonwealth that it professed to be. Day by day it became clear to more minds, and more clear to all minds, that to secure the integrity of the representation was to secure all that was wanted by reasonable malcontents, and all that was necessary to silence unreasonable disaffection. From the moment that reform of parliament became the ascertained and avowed aim of the enlightened part of the English nation, a new life was infused into the frame of English society. Disaffection was absorbed into a strenuous political action, and the noblest virtues of activity, self-denial, and generosity manifested themselves with growing vigour and glory, till the struggle and the sacrifice of aristocratic prejudice, privilege, and interest were completed, as regards that particular effort, by the achievement of parliamentary reform in 1832. It was not till that

year that the work was seen to be effectual; but the effort yielded inestimable fruits from month to month of the ten preceding years. During all that time, the people were learning to apprehend the value of that representative system which had been duly appreciated hitherto only fitfully and partially, and had still to be studied as a new lesson by the whole of the generation which had been occupied by the ideas of the war. The lesson was learned, soundly and thoroughly. The lowest of the people came to know something of the idea of citizenship; the instructed became animated with more vivid and definite conceptions of political duties and liberties; and the holders of aristocratic power, privilege, and interest—those who held much of the representation as a personal property, were strengthened and prepared for a sacrifice of political privilege and property, so noble as is even yet hardly appreciated, but will not fail to be admired and honoured as it ought through the unborn generations which will read history in the clear light of a future age. While the apprehensive and narrow-minded rulers of that period were shuddering over the revelations of the time, and writing to each other that 'all that just and honest pride which once gave comfort and dignity to a state of existence in this country, is nearly cancelled and obliterated,' that country was preparing to show how safe and how noble an abode it was for the principles of true liberty and impartial law, and how little was to be feared for a nation whose multitude desired to share in the responsibilities of legisation and order, and whose aristocracy could surrender ancient privilege and property at the summons of a new time. There had long been some among that aristocracy, enlightened and humane, who had been awake to this summons, and many among the multitude who had been impatient at its delay; but the effectual efforts which achieved the reform of parliament may be considered to have begun from this spring of 1821.

The avowals and incitements uttered at that dinner at the London Tavern on the 4th of May, spread through the land, being preceded by one, and followed by two more distinct movements in parliament. That movements in parliament were instigated and supported by the country

is evident enough—not only from the obvious truth that no order, or corporate or assembled body, ever reforms itself without pressure from without, but from the number of petitions for reform which we find sent up to the House during this and succeeding sessions. Supported by a mass of such petitions, Mr. Lambton moved, on the 17th of April, for a committee of the whole House, to consider the state of the representation of the people in parliament. During the debate, which occupied two evenings, the opposite benches were nearly empty; and there was so thin an attendance during both evenings as to show that the House itself was little aware of the growing importance of the question before it. The division was taken during the absence of the leading members on both sides, and even of Mr. Lambton himself, the numbers being 55 to 43; that is, there was a majority of 12 against Mr. Lambton's motion. Perhaps the leading members on both sides might have been surprised if they could have been told how, on that day eleven years, the country would be awaiting the issue of the struggle, in the certainty of success; and how, on that day twelve years, the reformed parliament would be in full career, at leisure for further improvements, from the great question of the century being disposed of.

On the 9th of May, Lord John Russell took up the subject, without securing much more attention to what he had to say than Mr. Lambton had enjoyed. Few 'leading members' took the trouble, or had the courage to attend while he recommended his resolutions. These resolutions went merely to declare that the people were dissatisfied with their representation; that means should be taken to effect a representation of wealthy and populous places which had as yet no voice in the legislature; and that boroughs convicted of bribery and corruption should be disfranchised. There was little debate; the first resolution was condemned by a majority of 31 in a House of 279; and the others were negatived without a division.

Unpromising as all this looked, a real beginning was made, and immediately, to amend the representation. Grampound was disfranchised, to the dismay and grief of the lord chancellor, who saw no bounds to the mischief

of depriving some possibly innocent electors there of their votes, on account of the corruption of the rest, while he could perceive no reason for giving the franchise to Leeds, Birmingham, Manchester, and other populous places. As the bill passed the Commons, the Grampound franchise was to be transferred to Leeds; but the Lords decided for two additional members for the county of York, instead of giving a representation to Leeds. There was some difficulty as to whether the Commons should put up with such a contravention of their will by the Lords; but Lord John Russell thought it important to take all that could be got on this question; and, though the bill had ceased to be his charge after sustaining some essential alterations before it went up to the Lords, he secured its final acceptance by the Commons, and it passed on the 30th of May. It was on occasion of this bill that Mr. Ward said that he did not conceive that by voting for the disfranchisement of Grampound, 'he was giving any pledge to what was called parliamentary reform.' So he thought, and so thought many who were, like him, unaware that they were now securely involved in a movement against which they had formerly protested. It is instructive to read the records—in this case very brief—of the gradual enlargement of views which time and thought bring to such men. It is an instructive comment on the past, and a valuable prophecy as to the future. In October, 1819, Mr. Ward writes to the Bishop of Llandaff: 'All I am afraid of is, that by having the theoretical defects of the present House of Commons perpetually dinned into their ears, the well-intentioned and well-affected part of the community should at last begin to suppose that *some* reform is necessary. Now, I can hardly conceive *any* reform that would not bring us within the draught of the whirlpool of democracy, towards which we should be attracted by an irresistible force, and in an hourly accelerating ratio. But I flatter myself there is wisdom enough in the country to preserve us long from such an innovation.' In April, 1820, he writes: 'But I confess that when I see the progress that reform seems to be making, not only among the vulgar, but among persons like yourself, of understanding and education, clear of interested motives and party fanaticism,

my spirits fail me upon the subject. . . . . I should look forward with much more comfort to what may remain to me of life, if I could persuade myself that the first day of reform was not at hand, and that the first day of reform would not be the first day of the English revolution.' In February, 1821, he tells his correspondent that Sir J. Mackintosh 'would keep the nomination boroughs;' adding: 'For my part, I am well enough content with the constitution as it is. This much, however, I must confess, that if public opinion—the opinion of men of sense and reflection like yourself, unconnected with party—once turns against it, there ought to be a change. We anti-reformers stand upon *practical benefit*—now there is no talking about the *practical benefit* of a discredited constitution.' In June, 1822, though still declaring himself 'afraid of parliamentary reform,' he speaks with satisfaction of the control exercised by public opinion over the votes of the Commons, and bears this remarkable testimony to the improvement of the national mind under the agitation of the question. Writing of Byron's prediction of a revolution, he says: 'For my part, I cannot help flattering myself, in spite of a great deal of distress, and some discontent, that this event is highly improbable. It appears to me that the people of England are advancing in knowledge and good sense. Party-spirit seems to be less blind and furious than it used to be. There is less factious opposition—I am not speaking of the House, but of the country—to the ministry, and less factious support of it. People do not abandon themselves so entirely to certain leaders, but exercise a more discriminating judgment upon each question as it arises.' In a few years, he became a member of the Canning ministry. Here we have in brief the history of a large class of the minds of the time, which were opening sideways, as one may say, while those of the lowest order of reformers were opening upwards.

The other great feature of the session was the removal of the conflict on the Catholic claims to the floor of the House of Lords. It was evident to all far-seeing men that the time was approaching when it would no longer do for politicians to go on repeating from year to year their own

feelings about admitting Catholics to the legislature, and their own opinions about the pernicious character and tendencies of the Catholic faith; but when they would be compelled by circumstances to take a fresh view of the whole question, modified as it was by the admission of new elements, and bearing a new relation to the history of the time. The occasion was drawing on from year to year. When we see it arrive, we shall take a brief survey of the old view in offering the aspect of the new. Meantime, it must be recorded here that this session of 1821 was marked by the going over of the Commons to the cause of the Catholics, and by the responsibility of their exclusion from political life being thrown upon the Lords. It was in March of this year that Mr. Ward wrote: 'Well! what say you at Oxford to the progress the Roman Catholics are so evidently making towards an equal participation of all privileges? Is it borne patiently, or will a great cry be raised? Not that I think the bill will pass *this* year; but the *intellectual* preponderance in its favour is so great in parliament, that one can hardly conceive either that or some such measure being very long delayed. The tone of opposition to it is lowered to the utmost point.' It was not by 'intellectual preponderance' that Mr. Plunket's bill was thrown out in the Lords, after having been passed in the Commons by a majority of 19 on the third reading. 'The Duke of York,' says Lord Eldon, 'has done more to quiet this matter than everything else put together. It has had a great effect.' If 'everything else' on that side delayed the resistance to the Commons less than the Duke of York, the resistance was obviously in a desperate state. If the duke had had anything to claim on the ground of 'intellectual preponderance,' he was mortal, and he was not young. So the issue was not doubtful, and probably not distant. The Catholics rejoiced with the quietness politic under their still depressed condition. The lovers of civil and religious liberty rejoiced more loudly and openly. The Lords rejoiced also. In their blindness to what was coming, they thought all was well when they had thrown out the bill of this session by a majority of 39. Lord Eldon writes: 'I have nothing further to delay your drinking to the thirty-nine

who saved the thirty-nine articles—a very fashionable toast.' Their rejoicing might be allowed ungrudgingly—not only because it was short-lived, but because it was merely a veil shrouding terrors, not the less pitiable for being visionary. The spirit of fear is as much an object of compassion to the spirit of faith in politics as in any other department of life; and, till those who suffer under it can be disabused of their terrors, any snatches of relief and mirth that they can enjoy may be regarded with forbearance, and even sympathy, by those, among others, whom they are oppressing for yet a little while. So the Catholics could smile at the echoes of the toast of the thirty-nine, while diligently preparing for a re-urging of their claims.

This year is remarkable for an organised attack upon the freedom of the press. It was so soon baffled, and so effectually resisted, that a mere notification of the fact would serve, were it not that the promptitude and fidelity shown in the defence of liberty of printing are themselves a feature of the times which ought to be prominently brought forward.

Seasons of harsh rule are invariably those of licence of speech. Men under torment or in bonds groan or curse; and a people under stringent misrule will rail; and their baser part may be expected to mock and blaspheme. Thus it was while Lord Sidmouth was in power. Libels, caricatures, irreligious scoffs, abounded; and the more they were noticed, the more they abounded. It is observable that these libels were not the weapon of any one party. While the lowest vendors of printed trash were lampooning the rulers of the country, the government press was libelling the leaders of the popular party; and, indeed, pouring out slanders against every man of liberal politics whom it could find means to attack. Evil-speaking seemed to have sprung up like a curse all over the land. Statesmen, and private gentlemen, and literary men, were fighting duels; and the prisons and police-offices were crowded with bold ruffians or tattered ballad-vendors, who dealt in railing for bread. Women were shamed in newspapers—a thing not much to be wondered at, at a time when the highest woman in the realm was

pilloried in the House of Lords for a succession of weeks; the king was caricatured—the ministers were nicknamed—every public man was slandered—and the diseased appetite for mockery and vituperation seized upon sacred things; and there was nothing so high or holy, but that it was laid hold of for purposes of malice or low wit. The evil was undeniable. The only questions were how it arose, and how it was to be dealt with. The great practical mistake was in the conclusion that it arose, unprovoked, from the natural wickedness of men, and that it must be put down by the strong hand—this strong hand being by no means impartial in its pressure. Forty peers and bishops, a large number of the clergy of the Established Church, and of Tory leaders, in and out of parliament, formed themselves into a company which they called the Constitutional Association, but which was soon better known through the country by the name of the Bridge-Street Gang. They invited subscriptions and co-operation from all who were well-disposed towards piety, peace, and order; and their appeal to the religious world, and on behalf of morals, taste, and quietude, was extensively responded to. It took some time to show well-meaning and apprehensive people the tyranny and vice of a system of party superintendence of the press. But this tyranny and the vicious principle of the society were apparent soon enough to secure the speedy insignificance and decay of the enterprise. Englishmen soon began to see that the forty peers and bishops who undertook the control of the press could be no proper members of a court of final appeal. As censors of the press, they could not properly sit as judges in the House of Lords. Englishmen soon began to inquire what was to become of their liberties if a rich association of great men was to spread its police of spies and informers over the land, and prosecute every poor tradesman who might offer to sell what they considered blasphemous and seditious works. It was evident that by a mere threat of prosecution they might deter any tradesman, but a stout-hearted one here and there, from selling any book or paper which they did not approve. Englishmen soon began to cry 'Shame!' when they saw members of this association taking their places in the

jury-box in trials for libel; and the fate of the enterprise was sealed when the judges adopted the practice of compelling jurymen to declare upon oath whether they were members of the Constitutional Association, before permitting them to enter upon their function. The society had sent a circular to every justice of the peace throughout the country, offering their exposition and application of the law of libel, and requiring that it should be universally made known, as its diffusion would be considered in aggravation of punishment in convictions for libel henceforward; they had raised a vast fund, instituted many prosecutions—thrown grey-haired men, starving women, and ill-conditioned adventurers into prison, to grow desperate there, and do double mischief when they came out again; they had usurped the office of the attorney-general, interfered with the administration of justice, and laid hands on the press, and were about to raise up, by provocation, a counter-association, in conflict with which the peace, temper, and manners of society would probably have given way altogether; when, at this point, the ravage was stopped. Exposure was all that was necessary; and the exposure was easily and speedily made. The association was formed in December, 1820. On the 23rd of the next May, Mr. Brougham directed the attention of the House of Commons to its proceedings; and after a discussion of its legality and morality, a few nights afterwards, its vigour decayed; and before another year was over, we find it spoken of in the records of the time as a thing gone by—a mischief and danger practically extinguished, though the assocation was not disbanded. When we consider what the resources of this society were, in funds, numbers, rank, influence, and the support of good principle and feeling—however misled and misapplied—we cannot but be struck with the strength and liveliness of the English instinct for liberty, and grateful for the security afforded by its vigilance.

So late as the end of April of this year, Lord Eldon writes to his brother: 'No Irish expedition; probably no coronation.' Yet the king was crowned, and went to Ireland, and also, later in the year, to Hanover. When he went to Ireland, his ministers were happy in the hope that the

visit of the soverign would 'tranquillise' that unfortunate country; and the accounts sent home by Lord Sidmouth, who attended the king, of his reception, show no misgiving as to the duration of the 'good-feeling' with which his majesty was greeted. Nothing was visible but 'enthusiastic loyalty,' inducing hopes of 'permanent benefit,' and this as late as September. Yet, on the 20th of October, Lord Sidmouth reports to Lord Londonderry (Lord Castlereagh, under his new title) 'very unpleasant accounts from Ireland.' Unreasonable as it would be at any time to expect to satisfy a malcontent nation by a passing visit from the sovereign, there seem to have been special reasons, in this case, why the royal appearance acted only for the moment, and on the surface—and a limited surface. While the royal squadron was wind-bound off Holyhead, news arrived of the death of the queen. The king proceeded to Dublin and secluded himself till the corpse of his wife was supposed to have left England. He then emerged—in a mood which we can imagine to be shared by the crowd around him under the stimulus of Dublin festivities, but which can hardly be supposed to have so impressed the Irish nation with reverence and love as to work in them a sudden restoration to peace, contentment, and loyalty. 'I cannot help suspecting,' writes Mr. Ward, 'that his majesty's late journeys to see his kingdoms of Ireland and Hanover will not, on the whole, redound much to his honour or advantage. His manners no doubt are, when he pleases, very graceful and captivating. . . . . But on the whole, he wants dignity, not only in the seclusion and familiarity of his more private life, but on public occasions. . . . . He seems to have behaved, not like a sovereign coming in pomp and state to visit a part of his dominions, but like a popular candidate come down upon an electioneering trip. If the day before he left Ireland, he had stood for Dublin, he would, I dare say, have turned out Shaw or Grattan.'

At the coronation, which took place on the 19th of July, George IV., for the time, looked the king. There was hollowness there too. The blaze of jewels, the splendour of the robes, the pealing of the music, the cry of 'God save the king,' the smiles and loyal eagerness, all

looked like rejoicing; but the king's chancellor, the keeper of his conscience and slave of his prerogative, admits: 'Everybody went in the morning under very uncomfortable feelings and dread.' The reason why was known to all. There was one outside knocking for admission, 'trying every door in the Abbey in vain.' This phantom of an injured queen was felt, though not seen, amidst the festivities; and how dreaded it was, we perceive from the triumph of the pious Lord Eldon in her mortification. 'It is all over, quite safe and well. . . . . A gentleman in the hall told us, that when her majesty got into the carriage again, she wept. . . . . John Bull spared us; indeed, his family were very civil to me, in the course of my transit from the hall to the Abbey. The business is certainly over in a way nobody could have hoped.'

Another 'business' was 'certainly over' just at this time, which must have caused relief to the king and his ministers, even greater than that the coronation passed off well. It may be hoped that they also felt something of the solemn and mournful emotion which ran through the heart of the civilised world at the news. While the pageantry of our great regal festival was preparing—while the gems were burnishing, and the tapestries unrolling, and the throne erecting, and the choir practising, the Chamber of Deputies at Paris were receiving the following petition:

'Napoleon is no more. We claim his remains. The honour of France requires this restitution; and what the honour of France requires will be accomplished. She cannot endure that he who was her chief—that he whom she saluted with the title of Great, and the designation of Emperor, should remain as a trophy in the hands of foreigners; and that every Englishman may say, on showing an insolent monument: "Here is the Emperor of the French."'

The temper of this petition may be excused when it is considered that it is from the officers and adherents of Napoleon, who saw him pine and die, far from home, and in captivity. At such a moment, they had the sympathy even of those who had most urgently demanded that the world should be secured by the rigid seclusion of him who

had troubled it so long and so severely. Now that it was over, and that that restless spirit could trouble his race no more, the natural feelings of compassion and regret arose strongly and universally. His fellow-men began at once to look back upon him as a man, and not only as a conqueror and disturber who had humbled the pride of nations, and broken up the peace of continents. He was at once regarded as a suffering man—all pitying him for the dreadful fate of his closing years, spent in chafing against his bonds, and sinking under the burden of ignominious idleness; while the most thoughtful had a still deeper compassion for him, as one who had failed in the true objects of human life by the pursuit of personal aims. Looking back, they saw how one endowed with noble powers could have known but little of the peace of the soul; and how, in the crowning moments of his triumphs, his life had been a failure. Looking forward, they saw how, throughout the whole future of human experience, he would stand dishonourably distinguished from the humblest servant of the race who had ministered to its real good. Many, throughout all time, who have apparently been baffled in their aims, and laboured in vain to work out their schemes, have, visibly or invisibly, attained the truest and highest success by an unwavering fidelity to the right and the true, and have enjoyed their natural recompense in the exaltation of their own being. This one man, before whose powers the nations quailed, and whose will seemed to be, for the time, the law of his kind, was, in his very triumphs, a sufferer—a wanderer from the home of human affections—a powerless and defeated soldier in the conflict of human life. And he could not retrieve himself in adversity. Leisure and solitude brought no healing to him. He had no moral force which could respond to the appeal of adverse circumstance. He had in him nothing of the man which could, in a season of rest, look back with wonder or a smile on the turbulence of its childish vanity and pride; nothing of the sage which could draw from the vicissitudes of experience any aliment of present wisdom and peace. He remained to the last morally a child and a sufferer—a baffled child, and an unconscious sufferer from worse woes than his mortifica-

tions, his bondage, and his privations. It might be a question whether all was done for him, or done in the best way, which his vast powers, and his misfortunes, and his appeal as an enemy, might claim; but if all had been done which the highest wisdom and magnanimity could suggest, it could have really availed him nothing. His misery lay too deep for healing by human hands: it was wrought into his very being; and it could be dissolved by no touch short of that which took out the life from the clay, and gave back the dust to dust. That time had now come. The dulled eye no longer wandered over the boundless ocean which surrounded his island-prison; his aching mind no longer gazed abroad listlessly over the heaving sea of human affairs; his spent heart had ceased its beating; and his dust lay under the willows in that nook at St. Helena, where strangers came from the east and the west, to feel and wonder at the silence which had settled down on one who had made the world echo with the wail of the widow and the orphan, the groans of dying multitudes, the tramp of hosts, and the crash of falling empires. In this nook of the world there had been no peace to his soul; and it was, perhaps, all the more soothing to find quietness about his grave.

He died on the 5th of May 1821, after a painful and lingering decline. The news of his death reached England while London was preparing for the coronation of the sovereign who had had him in charge, and who was to follow him, after the lapse of a few years, to that bed of rest where foes lie down side by side—comrades at last.

CHAPTER IV.

Coalition with the Grenville Party—Retirement of Lord Sidmouth—Mr. Peel—Mr. Canning—Lord Wellesley in Ireland—Motion in favour of Catholic Peers—Peterborough Questions—New Marriage Act—Close of Session—King's Visit to Scotland—Death of Lord Londonderry—Mr. Canning Foreign Secretary—Lord Amherst goes to India.

Lord Liverpool's administration had been very powerful in its day; and it still preserved an air of authority and security which imposed upon the general public, and prevented all but the watchful lovers of liberty on the one hand, and those who dreaded change on the other, from perceiving that a new time was coming—a way opening for the arrival of new men and new measures.

The ministry were not strong with the king. We have seen how nearly they were going out immediately after his accession. Again, when the king went to Hanover, there existed 'an uncomfortable state of feeling between himself and his prime-minister,' which was afterwards accommodated; but not for long. In December, he was anxious and ill-humoured about a new creation of baronets, on which Lord Sidmouth observes, in a note to the premier, 'and really the matter is not worth a gale of wind, much less a storm.' However trifling the subject of these royal discontents, their frequency was by this time affecting the strength of the ministry.

The administration was not strong in itself. Lord Sidmouth had long been wishing to retire; and there was perpetual apprehension of the lord chancellor being compelled to do so. Lord Londonderry showed at times symptoms of fatigue and nervousness which made his colleagues uneasy, and caused the king to advise rest and change of scene; and the anxieties and toils of office were wearing down the frame of the premier himself.

The administration was not strong with the country, though its weakness was not perceived by everybody. The distress of the agriculturists was pressing; and the

return to cash-payments had so lowered prices, and for the time destroyed the ordinary relation between money and other commodities, that the embarrassment created extreme discontent. While the ignorant and impatient of both the moneyed and the landed classes threatened each other with confiscation of the funds or of estates, both united in claims for relief from the government which no government could grant. The ministry preserved their attitude of grave sufficiency; but they looked about for aid and support.

Above all, the administration was not strong in regard to the times. It spent a good deal of leisure and energy in bemoaning the changes in the spirit of the times; but it could not prevent them, and it could not cope with them. It would fain have strengthened continually the policy of the Holy Alliance abroad; it would have kept a good old Protestant Tory, with underlings like himself, in power in Ireland; it would have gone on imposing the same taxes, and following the same routine in England for another term of years; but it could do none of these things. Amelioration drew on, in spite of their fears and endeavours. England was about to will a more liberal continental policy. Ireland was about to have rulers well disposed towards the Catholics. A remission of taxation was becoming necessary, and the principles of commerce were brought more and more into question every year. Something must be done. What should it be?

To keep the Whigs not only out of office, but out of all thoughts of office, was the first thing necessary. The Whigs were not trained for office, and were supposed to be so incompetent to its business that it would be the greatest of misfortunes to the country if their brilliancy and moral force in parliament should carry them into work for which they were unfit. They were supposed to be aware of this unfitness, and to rely for its reparation on the Grenville party in alliance with whose practical ability they could undertake to govern the country. The thing to be done, therefore, was to separate the Grenvilles from all sympathy with the Whigs. It was a sore necessity, that of proposing a coalition with the Grenvilles; but it was done. The lord chancellor mourned over it. 'This coalition, I think, will have consequences very different

from those expected by the members of administration who brought it about. I hate coalitions.' The inconveniences were indeed great. The Grenville party of course agreed in the main in the political principles of the Liverpool cabinet, or the coalition could not have taken place; but they were friendly to the Catholic claims, differing in this important matter from every member of the cabinet except Lord Londonderry; and on the whole, there was an inclination towards liberalism in them which was disturbing to official men who had so long thought alike, and had all their own way. Lord Liverpool and his colleagues had to reconcile themselves to the changes which they had found themselves compelled to make, by the consideration that they had materially damaged the opposition. It was not only the opposition that was damaged by the change. The supporters of government were made as angry as the opposition leaders were made ironical by the sight of the lavish gifts made to the new allies on their own demand. The Whig Lords wrote and said that 'everything had fallen in price except the Grenvilles;' and the adherents of the ministry did not conceal their opinion that the good things given to the Grenvilles would have been more righteously and usefully bestowed upon themselves. The accession was not great, either as to numbers or ability. Lord Grenville had retired from public life, and would not be tempted out of his retreat. The Marquis of Buckingham was made a duke; one of the Wynns went to the head of the Board of Control; and another was sent as envoy to the Swiss cantons, with appointments of the value of about £4000 a year. In return, they brought a few votes to the government, lessened their own dignity and estimation in the eyes of men, and removed to a greater distance the prospect of the accession of the Whigs to power. One other function they unconsciously fulfilled —that of a signal to the nation that a change was occurring in the spirit of government which must bring on a new and better time.

A more important circumstance than that of the coming over of any number of Grenville officials and voters was that Mr. Peel at this juncture took the office from which Lord Sidmouth retired. There was little noise made

about this at the time. The friends and admirers of Lord Sidmouth once more congratulated him on the number of plots which he had detected, and the energy with which he had frustrated them; and all agreed that there was so substantial an accordance between the views, principles, and aims of himself and Mr. Peel, that the country would not feel the change of men. Such was really the belief and sentiment a quarter of a century ago; but how strange does it appear now! It seems scarcely possible that these men should have been regarded as, except in point of years, alike—alike to the destinies of the country; while now the elder is regarded as a conscientious and complacent bigot, a man of one idea, and that idea one which must unfit him for wise administration; while the other, then in the first full vigour of intellectual life, was preparing for an administration of affairs which should be signalised by perpetual extension and boundless fertility of resource. Lord Sidmouth watched for sedition from day to day, and dreamed of plots in all seasons of repose. His duty was, in his own eyes, to discover and quell sedition, which he called preserving the monarchy; his triumph was to frustrate conspiracy and hang the conspirators. His hope was to root up sedition, and leave the field of politics clear; and his solace in retirement was to be, that he had caught the wicked in their own snares, and in so far protected the good. 'The truth is,' he observes, 'that it was *because* my official bed was become comparatively a bed of roses that I determined to withdraw from it. When strewn with thorns, I would not have left it.' While no plot was hatching, there was nothing for him to do; and he took the opportunity of introducing his successor, to be in readiness for frustrating the next conspiracy. But that successor, considered at the time so wonderfully like him except in years, has not been engaged ever since about plots and sedition. He has looked deep into the causes of sedition, and seen how much better it is to obviate discontent than to punish it. He has looked forwards, so as to see that there is a law of progress as imperative in politics as in other human affairs; and he has learned to satisfy aspiration betimes, instead of attempting to crush it. He has looked abroad,

far and wide over the expanse of human interests, and has allowed his sense of responsibility to expand in proportion to that observation, till he has risen to the head of statesmanship, as statesmanship is in our age. He has been the watchman and steersman of an empire—almost of a world—while Lord Sidmouth was but its rat-catcher. A sober, industrious, vigilant rat-catcher was he, whose heart was truly in his duty; but he could not rise above that function; and it is striking to read now, in the registers of the time, concerning these two men, 'that the substitution of the one for the other could have no effect in the course of administration.' It is striking, too, to mark how lesser men speak of greater—the lesser men being unable to see beyond the circle filled by themselves. Lord Sidmouth writes approvingly of the demeanour of his successor, declaring that 'nothing could have been more becoming and creditable'—language which is called by his biographer 'an almost prophetic anticipation' of Mr. Peel's 'future eminence.' No; Lord Sidmouth was disturbed by no such stirrings of prophecy, or he would have remained on his 'bed of roses,' and have died on it sooner than recognise as a successor such a redeemer of malcontents as Mr. Peel has since become.

It was at present impossible for Mr. Canning to be invited into the administration. Men were not agreed as to the ground of the evident impossibility; but the general belief was that it was on account of his refusal to act against the queen. He had been an early and influential adviser of the princess: he would not join in any of the proceedings of her adversaries, and offered to resign, but was not permitted; so he went abroad. When, on his return from the foreign travel with which he had occupied the time of the prosecution, he found the discussion of her affairs unavoidably mixed up with that of all the doings of the administration, he peremptorily resigned his place at the Board of Control. By this step he was supposed to have incurred the royal displeasure; and he was not now one of the new members of the government. But his time was coming, and the nation did not long inquire for him in vain. Meanwhile there occurred, in regard to him, one of those striking instances of which history is full—of

how, while 'man proposes, God disposes.' The India Company were not inclined to dispense with such a man, if the government could do without him. They offered him the post of governor-general of India; and soon after parliament met in 1822, it was announced that Mr. Canning was to succeed Lord Hastings in that office. During the spring and summer, Mr. Canning continued his preparations for India; and the nation found time, amidst its pressure of business and of distress, to watch them with regret. Many of the multitude feared and disliked the aristocratic tendencies of the man, and the political bias of the statesman: the members of the administration disliked and cavilled at him; and there was much jealousy of him in the House of Commons: but still, the eyes of the nation were upon him; he was generally regarded as the foremost man in public life; and there was a prevalent feeling of sorrow and shame that he was allowed to go so far away. Still, his preparations went on. Mr. Ward wrote: 'It will be a singular and unsatisfactory termination to the career of the greatest orator in either House of parliament; of a man, too, whose talents have always been directed towards the support of a system of policy which has succeeded beyond the most sanguine hopes of its promoters.' Lord Londonderry was watching the outbreaks and repressions of rebellion in Italy, under the despotism of the Holy Alliance—not unconscious, perhaps, of the deep curses with which his name was proscribed through all the secret societies, and most of the homes of the continent: Ireland was on her trial again under the wise and mild administration of Lord Wellesley, who this spring succeeded Lord Talbot as viceroy: 'Vansittart's crest was elevated' on account of an improved report of the revenue; and Lord Sidmouth was hoping that 'perilous and merciless retrenchments' would be no more heard of; and this hope was so far disappointed as that £3,000,000 of taxes were taken off: the agricultural interest obtained a loan of a million, to support them till the first difficulties of a return to cash-payments were over: all these interests were in full career for the months of that spring and summer; yet Canning was never lost sight of for a

moment. When his preparations were made and the hour of sailing drew nigh, he went to Liverpool, to take his farewell of his constituents; and there we see him, 'at Seaforth House, the residence of his friend Mr. Gladstone (the father of the Right Hon. W. Gladstone), situated on a flat, stretching north of the town, and overlooking the sea. The room which he occupied looked out upon the ocean, and here he would sit for hours, gazing on the open expanse, while young Gladstone, who has subsequently obtained such distinction in the councils of his sovereign, used to be playing on the strand below.' On this occasion, as he sat 'for hours,' he was revolving in his mind news which had reached him on his journey down, and which would penetrate, and fill with his name, every corner of Europe, as fast as the winds could carry the tidings.

Of all the interests presenting themselves at this important season, none was more engrossing at the time than the state of Ireland. Alas! when was it otherwise? and when will it be otherwise? There is some satisfaction, however, in contemplating this period, because in this direction, as in others, some promise of a better government, and more social welfare, was dawning.' It must always be long, and seem yet longer, before the good results of an improved policy can appear in a reliable form in a society so disorganised as that of Ireland; but the institution of the improvement is meanwhile a cheering spectacle in itself. Lord Talbot was a viceroy whose mind was full of ideas of Protestant ascendency; and it was little that his humane and sensible secretary, Charles Grant, could do to ameliorate his rule; and at that time, the bigot Saurin, the unrelenting foe of the Catholics, was attorney-general for Ireland. Now the viceroy and the attorney-general Mr. Plunket, were in favour of the Catholic claims; and though the usual method was still pursued of appointing men of mutually counteracting tendencies, Mr. Goulburn being sent as secretary with the Marquis of Wellesley, the gain to the liberal cause was, on the whole, very great.

The effect of the king's visit was over almost as soon as he was out of sight; and then the heart-burnings among fellow-citizens in the towns, and outrages in the country,

went on as virulently as before. The conciliation dinner which was to celebrate the king's visit, was given up, and the committee publicly resigned their trust, on the ground of the dissensions of the parties who were to conciliate. The Catholics offered addresses of affectionate congratulation to the incoming viceroy; while the corporation of Dublin offered an address of affectionate condolence to the outgoing attorney-general. An attempt to introduce Catholics into corporations was defeated at a guild of Dublin merchants; and the majority made ostentatious rejoicings under the eyes of their new ruler. In the country, no man's house was secure; and those of the gentry were so many garrisons. Bands of Whiteboys—hundreds in a band—besieged these garrisons, fought, plundered, murdered, in defiance of police and soldiery. The soldiers, indeed, found themselves powerless against a foe so light-footed, so familiar with the country, and so utterly reckless and desperate as the peasantry of the south of Ireland. In the north, as usual, all was comparatively quiet; but at length symptoms of disorder appeared there also. It became necessary to empower the viceroy to proclaim any part of the country which might be disturbed; and in February two bills were passed, one to reimpose the Insurrection Act, and the other to suspend the Habeas Corpus till the ensuing 1st of August. In the course of the month of April, after a dreadful season of disorder and its punishments, comparative quiet seemed to settle down on that unhappy country; but to rebellion and its retribution now succeeded famine. As in later times, excessive rains rotted the potatoes in the ground; and, as in later times, the people were taken unprepared. They ate their potatoes till no more were to be had; and then they took to oatmeal, till they had no means of purchase left; and then they crowded the roads and towns to beg, or stole away into hiding-places, to die of hunger. As in later times, no seed-potatoes were left, to give some hope of a harvest the next year; and again, as so often before, did typhus fever follow upon the famine, quelling rebellion itself in destitution and woe. The next year's crop of potatoes, however, was good; there was a decline of insurrectionary movement; and the influence of the liberal

viceroy did perhaps all that it could under the circumstances. But the opinions and temper of the viceroy can effect but little in such a case, while the laws and the conduct of surrounding officials proceed on principles that he does not hold. That the Marquis of Wellesley was favourable to the claims of the Catholics was gratifying to them; but it did not enable him to do them or their country much good while the laws, and almost every one concerned in the administration of them, were anti-Catholic. The true field of Irish amelioration was the floor of parliament, where oppressive and insulting laws could be remodelled or repealed. To this end, Mr. Canning directed what he believed would be his last efforts for his country, before going to the distant dependency where he was henceforth to live and work. On the 30th of April of, as he supposed, his last session in parliament, he moved for leave to bring in a bill to annul the disabilities of Catholic peers to sit in the House of Lords. He professed to have hope that a measure so limited as this might be obtained; and he saw how its adoption must open a way to further concessions. The bill was carried successfully on its way, as far as to the second reading in the House of Lords, when it was thrown out by a majority of 42.

Till the enlarged liberality of the laws should enable him to do more, Lord Wellesley did, from his own resources of wisdom and humanity, what he could. He greatly improved the police of Ireland; he completed the revision and amendment of the list of magistrates; he suppressed the offensive demonstrations of the Orange party, forbidding the procession of the 5th of November, and the decking out of the statue on College Green; and he received with magnanimous good-humour the evidences of unpopularity which he thus brought upon himself. The Dublin corporation censured him, under cover of a censure of the lord mayor, who had co-operated zealously with him. The 'Protestant' newspapers abused him. The 'Protestant' public mobbed him at the theatre; some fraction of that loyal public throwing a bottle at him on one such occasion. The turbulent people under him might behave as they would; it did not deter him from attempting to do them good. The secret of success in that

endeavour has not yet been found; but there can be no doubt that the administration of Lord Wellesley was a benefit to Ireland in many ways. Never before, perhaps, were the affairs of Ireland so copiously discussed in the legislature as in this season, when her saddest disorder and misery called forth only the more of the paternal element in the mind and heart of her excellent ruler. Sir John Malcolm wrote of him, a year later than this time, that he 'was glad to find the extreme Catholics as much out of humour with the lord-lieutenant as the extreme Orangemen; and that 'that strange scene, Ireland, appeared to be just at that crisis when all his highest qualities, if allowed their scope,' must do 'essential good.' If we see as yet, but too little of this 'essential good,' we must remember that Ireland has improved since the times prior to Lord Wellesley's rule; improved in resources, and even—bad as matters yet are—in principle and temper; and there is no saying how much worse she might have been now but for him—how her Orangemen might have raved, and her factions have fought and jobbed, as before his day. But there is so little to be said yet of hope and gratulation about Ireland, that it is a welcome change to turn to any other scene—even of strife.

A strife took place in the Church at this time which requires notice from its connection with both past and future states of religion in England. Throughout its whole existence, the Church of England has included three parties of religionists; men who naturally class themselves under one of three methods of regarding and receiving the religion which is equally precious to them all. These sections are the High Church, the Calvinistic, and the Moderate; or, as we call them at the present day, the Catholic, the Evangelical, and the Liberal. By the constitution and principle of the Roman Catholic Church, men of all tendencies of mind are retained in harmony within its pale. Under the authority of that church, every diversity of mind, manners, and morals may repose, without further strife than must arise wherever the inquisitive and active mind of man has scope and interest. But a similar repose and harmony are not possible in a Protestant Church, whose appeal is to the Scriptures

themselves, or in other words, to some other interpretation of the Bible than that of an infallible authority. In the framing of the thirty-nine articles, openings were left for the liberty of scrupulous minds and strict intellects; and by the spirit of the Church itself, it has always been understood that the various human mind was to be liberally and gently dealt with, in regard to difficult matters of doctrine. The mischief to be apprehended is, that bigots who have the power will think it right to close such openings, which they consider openings to error; and the hope in such cases is, that the instinct and principle of liberty which wrought the Reformation will ever watch over the rights and privileges it was intended to secure.

Every one knows how much it cost Wesley to leave the Church; and all can understand how men who followed soon upon his time might not only share his reluctance in that particular, but take warning against dissent, from the spectacle of the Methodist hierarchy, established with great and threatening power outside the limits of the Church. Some individuals of strong Calvinistic tendencies had applied themselves for a considerable period before our present date to rouse the Church from its indolence and carelessness; from what has been called its 'avoidance of all collision with controverted points, its study of ease and repose, its dealings in truisms and generalities, and subsidence into a calm ethical view of Christianity.' This rousing, it was naturally thought, would be best effected by the placing in the pulpits of the church the greatest possible number of earnest men, of sentiments called, in the language of the time, evangelical. Mr. Wilberforce and his friends did much in furtherance of this object; and their efforts no doubt caused a great revival of life in the church, and of personal religion in the higher classes of society. But, as was sure to happen, they roused something else besides religious earnestness. They awoke the old High Church spirit of domination and exclusiveness, which wrought at first in single instances, and gradually enlarged its scope, till the attention of the whole of society was fixed on that movement, called Tractarian, which we shall have occasion to survey at a future time. The first striking instance of the awakening of the old High Church

spirit of domination over faith occurred at this time, and made no little noise.

On the 14th of June, 1821, a petition was presented to the House of Lords by Lord King, from the Rev. Henry W. Neville, rector of Blatherwick. The story was this; and it was presented to parliament only because the petitioner had no other appeal. This rector was under obligation to present a curate to a living in the diocese of Peterborough; and he did accordingly present the Rev. John Green—a man of unquestionable character and ability, who had signed the thirty-nine articles, and was ready to sign them again. The bishop of Peterborough (Dr. Herbert Marsh) sent to him a printed paper, containing eighty-seven questions drawn up by himself, requiring answers to these—such answers as should be satisfactory to the bishop—as a condition of the curate being licensed. Mr. Green declined this new test; and the bishop refused his licence. An appeal to the Archbishop of Canterbury being unsuccessful, the petitioner had no choice but to apply to the House of Lords for a judgment as to whether every bishop might frame new tests as a condition of entrance upon the offices of the Church. The matter was gone into at greater length the next year, when another petitioner, the Rev. Mr. Grimshawe, on behalf of the Rev. Mr. Thurtell, complained that the bishop would not even permit to the respondent any choice as to the mode, even in regard to length, in which he should reply to the questions. The questions were in a brief, even an abbreviated, form; printed so as to leave only a certain blank space within which the answers must be comprehended. Mr. Thurtell answered the questions, appending, on separate sheets, his statements of his opinions, and the reasons and authorities for them. But the bishop wanted 'short, plain, and positive answers,' that he might 'know whether the opinions of the persons examined accorded with those of the Church.' The points proposed were some of the most difficult and intricate to be found in the whole compass of theological science; and the wisest persons saw the most immediately and clearly that these were matters which could not be pronounced upon, except without any of the due reservations, in the compass of a few inches of

paper. The bishop pleaded his legal right to examine his clergy in any manner he chose; and if this legal right could not be denied, the inference was that some further security for liberty of opinion was needed than at present existed. He asserted that his method was not an innovation—that it was not even unusual; but the indignation and sorrow that it roused, seem to show that society was surprised at his proceedings, and quite indisposed to acquiesce in them. He pleaded, also, that there was nothing in his questions which was not in plain and direct accordance with the articles of the Church—the clear answer to which was that his fellow-clergy might think otherwise; and that if they did not, his questions were purely needless. On both occasions, the House of Lords refused to entertain the subject; but it was long before the country let it drop. On neither occasion was a word uttered by any bishop but the one appealed against. Lord Carnarvon expressed his astonishment at their silence, and did not conceal his contempt of it. He declared that these spiritual peers, whose ample presence that night was certainly ornamental, though not apparently useful, were ready enough to give their opinion on constitutional questions, but had not a word to say on a matter so peculiarly within their province. The truth was, they were unprepared. The great subject of liberty of opinion was coming up again before they were trained and habituated to its discussion, or even to its consideration. If, as is probable, they all believed that their Episcopal brother had a legal right to do as he had done, but had yet been morally guilty of oppression, and therefore, functionally, of imprudence and mischief-making, they had better have said so. They gained nothing by their silence; for the country said it for them, through the press, the pulpit, and all private conversation. Something was gained to the cause of liberty of opinion, in and out of the Church; and much was done towards that clear marking out of the three great religious parties which have since been as prominently distinguished—allowing for the softened spirit of the times—as in the days when Laud pilloried the Puritans, and 'the ever-memorable Mr. John Hales' was 'bidding Calvin good-night.'

A new Marriage Act passed this session, which was of considerable importance as the first great step towards a return to that freedom of marriage which was absolutely unlimited prior to the legislation of 1753. The evils arising from nullity of marriages had long been found to be so great, that the Commons had, within five years preceding this time, passed three bills granting some relaxation. These bills had been thrown out by the Lords, who now, however, so amended the bill of the Lower House as to give it a far wider scope than had been proposed there. The bill, when it reached the Lords, provided that marriages which were null in law should become legal, if left thus far unquestioned by any competent tribunal; and that illegal marriages of minors should henceforth be not void, but only voidable; and voidable only within the minority of the parties, and under certain conditions. The Lords improved upon this so far as to decree that no solemnised marriage whatever could be annulled. The lord chancellor, his brother, and some other old-fashioned peers, were excessively scandalised at the favour with which this bill was received in their House; but they obtained little pity for their concern; for that concern was about those parts of the measure which related to property pledged under the former law to parties who profited by the irregular marriage of their connections. Such property would now go to the married parties, whose marriage would be legalised by the new bill. The lord chancellor was full of fears, as usual—fears that the House which had hitherto possessed the good opinion of the country would lose it, and be, before ten days were over, utterly despised as guilty of legal robbery. But the House knew what it was about, and what the nation would think. It supported the bill by a majority of more than two to one; and it was aware that 'the country' did not, like the lord chancellor, think that a few partial claims of property, accruing by accident and by such an accident as an illegal marriage were to be preferred to the everlasting and illimitable claims of a fundamental morality. It was undoubtedly a hardship that certain parties who had been led by a reliance on the statute to reckon on property forfeited by the irregular marriage of others

should be disappointed of their expectations; but the blame of this disappointment lay with a preceding generation of statesmen, who had been too blind to see the mischief they were doing in tampering with the freedom of marriage; and not with those who were now endeavouring to restore the sanctity and stability of an institution in which the morality of society was still involved. Imprudence and carelessness in contracting marriage are a great evil; but it is less than that of playing fast and loose with an institution whose very virtue resides in its certainty and irreversibleness. Whether a time may come when society may perceive that its moral purity can be better promoted than by connecting the conjugal relation with law and arrangements of property, is a question fairly open to the speculative moralist—a proper subject of individual opinion; but it was not the question now. There was no question of the institution itself, but of legal arrangements under it; and the Lords and 'the country' were united in considering the inviolability of marriage the first consideration in morality, and the fate of certain windfalls of property a very inferior one. So the country did not throw off its 'good opinion' of the Upper House 'within ten days,' as the lord chancellor prophesied, but certainly thought no worse of the Lords for the large majority with which they passed the new Marriage Act of 1822.

When the session closed, on the 6th of August, the king and the legislature dispersed, to take their rest and pleasure in various ways. On the 10th, the king set off down the Thames, in great pomp, on his way to Scotland. Lord Londonderry hastened to his seat at Foot's Cray, to prepare for his mission to the Congress of Verona in October, where he was to represent England. His passage thither was sure to be attended by the curses of all the lovers of freedom along the road, and by the groans of all the secret societies over which he was to ride rough-shod, to be welcomed at the end of his journey by the sympathies of all the despots in Europe. He probably knew this. He knew that the continent was honeycombed with these secret societies; and confident as he was of his motives—imperturbable as he was in his opinions—the consciousness of the hatred that would dog his steps may have

tended to disturb his nerves, and to perplex his brain. He had been overwearied with the fatigues of the session; and he had astonished and grieved his friends of late by extraordinary tales of conspiracies against his private character—of waylayings in the parks, and threats in the street against his purse, his reputation, and his life. He repaired to his country-seat, to refresh himself by rest and change of ideas, while some of his colleagues went to Scotland in attendance upon the king. Mr. Canning meantime was gone to Liverpool, to bid farewell to his constituents before embarking for India. There, while he looked abroad upon the sea from his window at Seaforth House, he had awful news to ponder—news which met the king on his landing at Leith—news which struck the despots of Europe aghast upon their thrones—news which was hailed with clasped hands and glistening eyes by aliens in many a provincial town in England, and with imprudent shouts by conclaves of patriots abroad.

'I have this moment heard from Liverpool,' writes the king to his chancellor, 'of the melancholy death of his and my dear friend, poor Londonderry.' 'Poor Londonderry' had destroyed himself. 'In common with everybody,' writes the chancellor, 'I am oppressed and much affected by the loss of the Marquis of Londonderry.' Everybody was 'much affected;' but everybody was not 'oppressed.' The relief to a multitude was so extraordinary and portentous, that little children who carried the news, as children love to carry wonderful news, without knowing what it means, were astonished at the effect of their tidings, and saw, by the clasped hands and glistening eyes of aliens in English towns, that there was a meaning in the tidings beyond their comprehension. There are some now, who in mature years, cannot remember without emotion what they saw and heard that day. They could not know how the calamity of one man—a man amiable, winning, and generous, in the walk of his daily life—could penetrate the recesses of a world, not as a calamity, but as a ray of hope in the midst of thickest darkness. This man was the screw by which England had riveted the chains of nations. The screw was drawn, and the immovable despotism might now be overthrown. It was not only the

sufferers who thought so. 'My great object,' continues the king to his chancellor—'my great object, my good friend, in writing to you to-night, is to tell you that I have written to Liverpool, and I do implore of you not to *lend yourself* to any arrangement *whatever*, until my return to town. This, indeed, is Lord Liverpool's own proposal; and, as you may suppose, *I* have joined *most cordially* in the proposition. It will require the most *prudent foresight* on *my* part relative to the new arrangements that must now necessarily take place. You may easily judge of the state of my mind.'

Others could judge of the state of the King's mind, nearly as well as the chancellor. He was afraid of having to accept Canning as a minister. While the crowd at Westminster Abbey greeted the removal of Lord Londonderry's coffin from the hearse with 'a shout which echoed loudly through every corner of the Abbey,' Mr. Canning was received with acclamations in the streets of Liverpool, and at a festival 'to which five hundred gentlemen sat down.' They had a persuasion that they should not lose him now. They could not be sure of this; for, as he told them, he did not himself know what to expect. 'I know as little,' he said, 'as any man that now listens to me, of any arrangements likely to grow out of the present state of things.' But every one was aware, and no one more than the king, that Mr. Canning was the only man equal to the post which was vacant, and that he must now fill it. It was a sore necessity; but circumstances were too strong for the royal and ministerial will. Yet 'it was not till the 8th of September that Lord Liverpool requested to see Mr. Canning. An interview took place on the 11th, when the foreign office was offered to him by the premier, and accepted after a struggle.' There was much of struggle in the business: struggle in the mind of the king and future colleagues who feared and disliked him; and no little struggle to him who well knew that he was entering on a career where he would ever find opposition in his front, and hatred by his side. What the struggle was to cost him was shown on a day too near for the interests of the world. But he was full of chivalrous courage; and he entered manfully on his task of liberating nations.

On the 17th of September, the Duke of Wellington set out for Verona, to attend the congress where Lord Londonderry had been expected; and Lord Amherst went to India in the place of Mr. Canning. Thus, while man had proposed, did God dispose; and the destinies of the world were thereby changed, beyond human calculation.

CHAPTER V.

Policy of Castlereagh—The Princes and Peoples of Europe—Revolutions Abroad—Policy of Canning—Congress of Verona—French Invasion of Spain—Overthrow of Spanish Revolution—South American Provinces—Appeal from Portugal—New Era of Conflict—Deaths of Potentates—Affairs of Greece—Algiers—Ashantee War—Burmese War—Oregon—Aliens.

THERE was abundant reason for the rejoicing which spread through the world on the death of Lord Londonderry; and the shout which rang through the Abbey when his coffin was taken from the hearse was natural enough, though neither decent nor humane. When a man's acts have proved him an enemy to his race, his race will not desire that he should live to continue those acts; and the case is not altered by any evidence that that man's eulogists can bring that he meant no harm; that he meant some kind of good; and that he was admired and beloved in private for certain qualities of his character. All these things may be true; as indeed they are likely to be; for the cases are rare in which men do deliberately mean harm, and propose to themselves to do things for the purpose of injuring others. The tyrant no more says to himself: 'Now I will oppress my people, and make them miserable,' than the liar proposes to himself: 'Now I will tell a lie;' or the sot: 'Now I will get drunk.' In all these cases the sin is done through a wrong habit of mind. It comes out of narrow views and selfish propensities; and not out of an express intention to do harm. The despots of Europe were not the less tyrants because they sincerely

proposed to themselves in their congress to make their alliance a mirror of the gospel, and to promote peace on earth by means which could not but drive men at one another's throats, and make the very name of a religious sanction ridiculous. The simple truth was that they did not understand the gospel they invoked, and were ignorant of the relation they held to their people. If the issue of their counsels was that the many were made miserable, it is natural enough that the many should rejoice at the withdrawal of the chief-counsellor. It was as natural that a shout should be raised in Europe, and echoed from the Andes, on the death of Londonderry, as that a groan should force its way, and tremble through the ocean to the shores of the New World, when, too soon after, Canning also disappeared from the council-board of nations.

Lord Londonderry may be called the chief-counsellor, because England certainly had the determining power as to the principles and grounds on which the policy of Europe was to proceed. If a true Englishman had been present, who would have taken for granted such things as are usually taken for granted in England, and wherever a representative system early impresses statesmen with a sense of the value of men and their welfare, the parcelling out of Europe could hardly have gone on as audaciously as it did in the first instance, or the government of nations by a cabinet of sovereigns through subsequent years. But Lord Londonderry had a mind too narrow to comprehend the constitution of the country he helped to govern, and by far too shallow to admit in its greatness the idea of the new era of peace on which the world had entered. He could not rouse or elevate the minds of the potentates who surrounded him, as England might and should have roused and elevated, at that juncture, from her disinterestedness, the better impulses of Europe. He entered for amusement, as it were, into the game which others were playing for stakes. He joined with others in fixing the boundaries of Europe, as men lay out an estate. As proprietors point out the convenience of a brook here—a rising-ground or a wood there—and consider, in their own way, the welfare of the resident serfs, this party of

potentates settled about the Rhine, and the Alps, and the interior forests; and threw together Belgium and Holland, and spread out the new Prussia, and disposed of Poland and Lombardy, and accommodated or bartered with each other about the boundaries of their imperial estates. The representative of England was the one who should have reminded them that the inhabitants were the party to decide under what government they would live and that nationality can no more be imposed than it can be uprooted in a day. But Lord Londonderry was not a man to whom these primary considerations ever did, or ever could occur; and those at home who sent him, were not the men who would spontaneously instruct him in a functional duty which he could not perceive for himself. Therefore, as nations are not serfs, and as the potentates were not, in this case, the unquestioned proprietors of men, the result did not answer to the gospel promises of congress; and the issues of the Holy Alliance were not exactly peace on earth, and good-will among men.

From this time forward, accordingly, the class of sovereigns and of peoples led lives as different as if they had been of different races; as if, instead of the paternal and filial relation between them which was pretended, there were no relations at all. At the Congress of Verona, in 1822, where the Duke of Wellington attended in the place of the deceased Lord Londonderry, 'the style of compliment adopted bordered, in some instances, upon the ridiculous. The old Bourbon, Ferdinand of Naples, though he had his good qualities, and no small share of humour and untrained sagacity, was notoriously the least educated and the most thoughtless, indolent, and ignorant king in all Europe; but, as he chanced to be the oldest of the kings that met at Verona, they called him the Nestor of that royal congress. . . . . The wordy and flowery Chateaubriand, who was present as a French negotiator, has turned it into a book and a romance.' At home, the King of Prussia amused himself and his advisers with devising a plan of a new nobility, which should suddenly become as imposing and influential as if it had been a thousand years old. Ferdinand of Spain was inventing tinsel ornaments for the Virgin. The princes of Germany

were putting off the irksome task of preparing the constitutions they had promised to their peoples. The King of Sweden was ordering the storthing of Norway not to think of abolishing their order of hereditary nobility. The Emperor of Russia was gratifying his benevolent feelings, by ordaining comparative personal freedom for his serfs, while stringently training his slave-army, and making military decoration the reward of all kinds of merit. The restored Bourbons of France were studying how best to impose dumbness on their noisy nation. The King of Sardinia was swimming paper-ducks in a wash-basin, to while away his days. The Emperor of Austria was, with Prince Metternich's help, devising sufferings and insults for the bodies and souls of the Confalionere and Pellicos, who, troublesome children as they were to such a father, would not accept his fatherly rule in peace, or agree that to spare the rod was to spoil the child. While the members of the Holy Alliance were thus employed, there was business of a different kind going on among the multitude below them.

In Denmark, the young theologian, Dampe, suspended from his public preaching, was giving private lectures on religion and politics; and in his study, preparing plans for revolutionising the kingdom, till he was shut up for life in solitude and silence. In Paris, towards midnight of a certain Sunday, Louvel was waiting outside the opera-house, his hand upon the dagger with which he hoped to cut off the successor to the throne of France by the murder of the Duc de Berri. In Germany, certain watchful eyes were counting the letters which Kotzebue sent through the Post-office, to inform the Russian autocrat of 'the state of literature and public opinion in the cities;' that is, of the open songs and secret societies by which the university students were endeavouring to rouse and organise the citizens for a purpose of constitutional demands; and the young fanatic, Sand, was secretly nourishing his resolution to free the land from the spy. When the act was done, and Sand was sent after his victim, 'thousands of spectators hastened, if possible, to get some drops of his blood, or some of his hair. The chair on which he sat when he underwent his punishment was

purchased of the executioner by a society for six louis-d'ors. No disorder, however, took place.' The time was not come for what newspapers call 'disorder,' though there was much of what the sovereigns considered so. The professors had 'not yet completely learned to confine themselves to their proper province;' they forgot the morals of the students in teaching them the principles of politics. Even at Vienna, and in the metropolitan seat of learning, such 'a spirit appeared that the emperor was compelled to have recourse to 'severe measures,' to control the teachings of the masters of learning. Along the Elbe, the Maine, and the Rhine, a silent symbol was put forth which troubled the repose of rulers on their thrones. For hundreds of miles, men appeared in the old German costume, which suggested to everybody thoughts of an 'ancient ideal system of Teutonic freedom.' In the streets of Jena and Heidelberg, and under the walls of the ducal palace at Darmstadt a song was heard—the celebrated 'Great Song,' 'Princes arise, ye people rise'—which was all discord to the ears of princes, all music to the hearts of the people, and whose authorship could never, by threat or stratagem, be discovered. While the emperor, at St. Petersburg, was dispensing his benevolences, his brother Constantine was torturing Polish officers at Warsaw, and teaching the most rapid lessons of rebellion to the crowds gathered about the great parade of the city. When any officer was declared to have failed to bring up his horse to a hair's-breadth in the line, he was compelled to leap his horse over a pyramid of bayonets so high that it was barely possible to escape impalement of one or both; if both escaped, the feat was to be done again, and then a third time: and after the popular cry of 'Shame!' and military intercession had compelled the prince to release his victim, it was no surprise to any one that that victim disappeared in the night, and for ever. This prince was, it is true, a sort of Caliban, and no more like the ordinary run of princes than that of men in general; but the world saw him in command of an army, and beheld in these scenes a spectacle of royal sport and popular suffering; and it went with other things to deepen the abyss between sovereigns and subjects.

In Spain, there was no longer any pause or any disguise. In the south, Colonel Riego rose in the beginning of 1820, and proclaimed the constitution of 1812. He was soon disabled by accidents of the season and of fortune; and every endeavour was made to conceal from the rest of the kingdom what had happened near Cadiz. It is doubtless more conceivable that such an attempt should be made in Spain, than that an English cabinet should hope to prevent the people of Scotland knowing of a rising in Dorsetshire; but it was yet too absurd to succeed. All Spain presently knew of Riego's enterprise; and the greater part of the nation immediately rose. In a few days, the rising was in a state to be reported to all Europe as the revolution in Spain. At the end of February, the king saw his generals and his best troops joining the liberal cause. On the 10th of March, he published his intention of convening the cortes, and instituting various reforms. But it was too late. The people of Madrid assembled round his palace, with shouts for the constitution; and on the evening of that same 10th of March, the feeble Ferdinand promised and proclaimed the constitution of 1812.

This Spanish revolution was the signal for many risings. In August, Portugal followed; and before the year was out, Naples had demanded and obtained the proclamation of the Spanish constitution. Then Piedmont prepared for a similar struggle, and believed liberty to be secure when Charles Albert, the present King of Sardinia, and then Prince of Carignano, swore that he would lay down his life for the cause. He laid down other lives, however, instead of his own; drawing back at the critical moment, and in fact, if not in purpose, betraying his confederates and their cause. And now occurred the circumstances which in reality assembled the congress at Verona, though the pretext was a consultation on the affairs of Greece. While Spain and Portugal were shouting at the fall of the Inquisition and many another ancient wrong, and Germany was chanting the echoes of freedom, and Piedmont and Lombardy were rapidly arming, and Naples was triumphing, and Sicily was trembling, as if the very Titan beneath her mountain were about to arise, what was doing in France? The King of France was engrossed with the fear that his

beloved subjects would catch a fever. That was the great affair in France in 1821. 'A most pestilent fever' had broken out at Barcelona the autumn before; and the French government, which took little apparent notice of the political epidemic which had appeared at Cadiz and Corunna, set up a vigorous opposition to this bilious fever at Barcelona. It does not appear that the disease spread beyond a small district; but the passes of the Pyrenees were filled with French troops; only one road was left open; and everything which passed in and out of Spain by that road was very critically examined. Every ass, and every handful of fruit was surveyed; and any person who passed the line without leave, anywhere from sea to sea, was to be shot. These precautions were so extreme, and continued so long after the epidemic had ceased to be heard of, that everybody saw that the fever was not the real object of the cordon. There had been, in fact, much correspondence between the French and Spanish liberals. The Spaniards had been, as usual, too forward and boastful, representing the liberal cause as more advanced than it was, in their own country and everywhere else; and the French sovereign had some reason to fear for his throne. Within a short time, so many conspiracies were broken up, and so many risings actually took place, that it is probable there was an understanding between the secret societies of other countries and those of France. From time to time, while these things were going on, more and more forces were posted along the Spanish frontier; till at last they looked so like a formidable army, that it became time for nations in alliance with both France and Spain to inquire what all these preparations were for. It was too late now to say anything more about the Barcelona fever; for the time we are speaking of was the autumn of 1822, the date of the Congress of Verona.

When the Duke of Wellington left London to attend the congress, Mr. Canning had been in office only forty-eight hours. It may be doubted whether he, bringing into office the comprehensive views of a bystander, believed, as the Duke of Wellington did, that the object of the congress was to consider the affairs of Greece, in prevention of a war between Russia and Turkey. At Paris, the duke was

informed by M. Villèle that the affairs of Spain would also be deliberated on; and he wrote home to desire instructions.

Here, in our view, is the parting point of the former and the later foreign policy of England. The moment of sending off the reply to the Duke of Wellington was one of inestimable importance, and worthy of earnest notification in history. The wording of the despatch was simple enough; and there may be little in its contents to indicate its significance; but there is just enough to show that a new spirit had arisen in that conspicuous sphere; and that the function of that new spirit was not to bind but to unloose. When the statesmen of the continent heard that Wellington was to be the substitute of Londonderry at the congress, they no doubt thought that the actual representative would be as good for their purposes as the proposed one, who had been called away to a very different congress; and it was probably a long time before they became fully aware of the magnitude of the change which had taken place through the substitution of personages at home. It was said everywhere for years, and is even at this day said by some, that the death of Londonderry made no difference whatever at Verona; that he would have protested against despotic aggression in Spain and elsewhere; and that Canning's opposition did not go beyond protests. But the character of a man's mind stamps itself upon all his acts; and protests to the same general effect from two men of opposite character and views may be as truly unlike each other as if they were opposed in substance. It was long before Mr. Canning did any official act so new and singular as to startle the world into a conviction that here was a new man who would reverse the old policy; yet he wrought the revolution as effectually as if he had done it by proclamation. He proclaimed nothing which could plunge England and other countries into a war, and precipitate the liberals everywhere into a rising which he could not undertake to sustain; but he furthered the liberties of the world quite as much by his heart being honestly with them, and his heartiness showing itself in all his transactions. Where Londonderry's despatches would have been vapid and meagre, because he preferred transacting busi-

ness, as far as possible, by confidential conversation, Canning's were frank and glowing, though moderate and clear. Where, in the palaces, cafés, and streets of continental cities, nothing could have been reported of Londonderry but what would have shown him a true brother of his colleagues in congress—as hard and unsympathising, as narrow, and as presumptuous as the rest who proposed to give the world a new image of the gospel—the speeches of Canning were creating a new thought and a new soul. Never did the fires of western forests run through the wilderness more gloriously than the speeches of Canning through the political wilds of Europe, under the deep night of the Holy Alliance. In those western wildernesses, the unaccustomed and the timid tremble and shriek, and hang together as they see the spreading flame, and hear the rush and roar, and think of the waste of ashes that will be seen to-morrow; but the hardy freeman enjoys the sight—enjoys the sprinkling and scattering blazes which seize upon decay and rottenness, to turn them into freshness and fruitfulness. And so it was when the utterance of Canning in the British parliament ran over Europe, kindling as it went. It was hateful and terrific to despots, because it leaped upon their abuses and scorched their vanities, and made of their antiquated dogmas ashes for a new growth of opinion; but the restless spirits of that time were quieted by that utterance—quieted not by compulsion, but from within. They could sit still, instead of prowling about under the shadow of that night, while they had this kindling to watch, and its promise to dwell upon. Nothing in the career of Canning is more striking than the quietness of his official action by diplomatic missions and state-papers, while the whole heart of Europe beat whenever he opened his lips to speak, and was ready to burst when he had done.

The reply to the Duke of Wellington's application for instructions ran as follows: 'If there be a determined project to interfere, by force or by menace, in the present struggle in Spain, so convinced are his majesty's government of the uselessness and danger of any such interference, so objectionable does it appear to them in principle, as well as utterly impracticable in execution, that when the

necessity arises, or, I would rather say, when the opportunity offers, I am to instruct your grace at once frankly and peremptorily to declare, that to any such interference, come what may, his majesty will not be a party.' This was decided enough; and it may be considered decisive. The assembled potentates said much—and much might reasonably be said—of the violent character of the liberalism of the time; of the danger to empire when civil reforms were insisted upon and undertaken, as in Spain, by the soldiery; of the certain disorganisation of society if secret associations were permitted virtually to rule; and of the ferocious character of wars thus occasioned: and all this appeared conclusive to persons who did not perceive how their own policy had generated all these perils: yet it was not determined at the Congress of Verona to interfere with Spain by force of arms. France pleaded strongly for such interference, on the ground of her own dangers from interior disturbances, and her vicinity to the revolutionised country: yet no interference with Spain was determined on at the Congress of Verona; and it was this instruction to the British representative which prevented it. He who issued that instruction saw that to make war on the plea of preventing war was the course most full of danger; and his plan was to endeavour by all possible prudence to preserve peace.

Mr. Canning's 'system' was much talked of at the time; and this was not to be wondered at, at a season when all government was supposed to be carried on by 'systems.' System was the one idea of the members of the Holy Alliance; and it was that which solely occupied the mind of Lord Londonderry. His successor differed from him in nothing more than in this. Mr. Canning saw that there can be no stability or working power in any system but by virtue of the principle involved in it; and his was a mind which could resort directly and constantly to the principle, leaving the details of operation to form and discover themselves as they were wanted. Being sure of his principle, he could thenceforth rely upon it; and hence his quietude in official action, his calmness and power of resource amidst the fluctuations of a disturbed time, and the consistency of his foreign policy amidst the

ever-changing aspects of circumstances whose total elements no enlightened mind would dream of comprehending. The Metternichs, Alexanders, and Ferdinands made a plan which they declared complete; and they would have endeavoured to coerce the very elements themselves when they arose to shatter it. The philosopher who had now come among them saw the narrowness and frailty of all political systems in an age when mankind had learned to live and move; and he knew that the age of self-will and system for rulers was past, while the ruling power of principles is everlasting. To speak of Canning's 'system,' therefore, is not to do justice to him. To understand him, we must look for his principle first, and then for the practical purpose which lay nearest to it.

His principle was the preservation of peace; and his immediate practical purpose was to dissolve, by the quietest means, the Holy Alliance.

Mr. Canning never concealed that he would have been glad to have left England unrepresented at the Congress of Verona, as the most immediate method of withdrawing her from the Holy Alliance; but the time was so short that the step would have been too hazardous. It took him two years to set England free for her own action abroad; but he did it peacefully and effectually. It was no very easy task. The sovereigns abroad and their ministers had carefully and constantly represented England as favourable to the principles of the Holy Alliance; and every countenance was given to this by Lord Londonderry's conduct, and by our war against revolution in France. All the rulers looked to England for aid against revolution everywhere. And the suffering nations, longing to rise, when assured that England did not favour the principles of the Holy Alliance, expected from her that she should aid revolution everywhere. Both these expectations included a breaking up of peace; and the preservation of peace was Mr. Canning's first object: so he gratified neither of the expectant parties.

But occasion soon offered for declaring the new policy of England, and for loosening the bonds of the alliance. It presently came out that the French army on the frontier of Spain was not wanted against the Barcelona fever, and

would march on into Spain, to aid Ferdinand against his subjects, and put down the constitution. The Emperor of Russia was delighted; and all the other potentates applauded and promised aid. But the Duke of Wellington followed his instructions, dissented and remonstrated, and withdrew. The instructions in this instance were clear and decided; Mr. Canning's words being, that 'if a declaration of any such determinations should be made at Verona, come what might, he should refuse the king's consent to become a party to it, even though the dissolution of the alliance should be the consequence of the refusal.' One consequence of the refusal was a correspondence between Mr. Canning, the flowery Chateaubriand, and the bigot Polignac, wherein the high-flown royalists expatiated on the blessing to the Spaniards of seeing their king free to give them, with French aid, such a constitution as should be best for then. Mr. Canning could not allow this to pass, and protested against the doctrine that constitutional rights are conferred by the royal pleasure. In noticing the speech of the French king on opening the chambers, in which the purpose of invading Spain was declared—while the Duc d'Angoulême laid his hand on his sword, and raised his eyes to heaven—Mr. Canning declared that the speech appeared to mean that 'the free institutions of the Spanish people could only be legitimately held from the spontaneous gift of the sovereign, first restored to absolute power, and then divesting himself of such portion of that power as he might think proper to part with;' that 'the Spanish nation could not be expected to subscribe to this principle, nor could any British statesman uphold or defend it.' . . . . It is indeed a principle which strikes at the root of the British constitution.'

After all M. Chateaubriand's declarations and fine sentiments in favour of peace, the Duc d'Angoulême laid his hand on his sword again, on the other side of the Pyrenees. The French invaded Spain. England had done what she could in declaring for the right, and seceding from the congress which advocated the wrong; she now held herself neutral. It was on the 14th of April, 1823, that Mr. Canning made in the House all the declarations rendered

necessary by the act of France in invading Spain. He explained the course and issue of all the attempts at mediation made by the English government, the grounds of the neutrality which she had now finally avowed; and pointed out what must be the conduct of England in regard to Portugal and the South American colonies of Spain, in certain contingencies which might arise. If Portugal joined Spain in repelling the French, there was no call upon England to interfere; but if Portugal, remaining quiescent, were to be attacked, that attack 'would bring Great Britain into the field with all her force, to support the independence of her ancient and her faithful ally.' As for the South American colonies, it was clear that Spain, though claiming them still as hers by right, had in fact lost all power over them. If France should, in the course of the war, capture any of them so that it would become at last a question whether they should be ceded, and to whom, it would be necessary for all parties to know that the British government 'considered the separation of the colonies from Spain to have been effected to such a degree that it would not tolerate for an instant any cession which Spain might make of colonies, over which she did not exercise a direct and positive influence. To such a declaration the British government had at last been forced.'

The declaration of neutrality was painful and disconcerting to some of the best men in parliament and out of it. They were so accustomed to speak of England as the champion of the liberties of the world, and had so completely understood her secession from the Holy Alliance as declaratory of this, that it appeared to them a disgrace to look on, without taking part in one of the most indefensible wars against liberty which had ever been entered into. The foreign secretary had much to encounter in the House—angry rebuke from some and pathetic expostulation from others. When the debate on the negotiations relative to Spain had been twice adjourned Mr. Canning offered, on the third night, an explanation of his proceedings and reasons, which secured him the enthusiastic support of the House and the country. The motion which had occasioned the debate was one of censure of the feeble-

ness of tone assumed by government in the recent negotiations; and the amendment proposed was, a declaration of gratitude and approbation in regard to what had been done. At the close, the opposition members were about to leave the House in a body; but some ministerial members called for a division. It was only for want of room in the lobby that any one appeared to vote against the government. The whole assembly poured into the lobby, till it could hold no more; and then the twenty members who were shut in were compelled to pass for an opposition, though there were ministerialists among them. They amounted to 20, in a house of 372.

One passage of Mr. Canning's speech spread over the world, and was vehemently hailed or resented wherever it reached:

'I contend, sir, that whatever might grow out of a separate conflict between Spain and France—though matter for grave consideration—was less to be dreaded than that all the great powers of the continent should have been arrayed together against Spain; and that although the first object, in point of importance, indeed, was to keep the peace altogether—to prevent any war against Spain—the first in point of time was to prevent a general war; to change the question from a question between the allies on one side, and Spain on the other, to a question between nation and nation. This, whatever the result might be, would reduce the quarrel to the size of ordinary events; and bring it within the scope of ordinary diplomacy. The immediate object of England, therefore, was to hinder the impress of a joint character, from being affixed to the war—if war there must be—with Spain; to take care that the war should not grow out of an assumed jurisdiction of the congress; to keep within reasonable bounds that predominating *areopagitical** spirit, which the memorandum of the British cabinet, of May, 1820, describes as "beyond the sphere of the original

* The council of Areopagus at Athens was remarkable for its penetrating and superintending character; pronouncing on the economy of private houses, and judging children for tormenting birds. It was a more meddling council than it became any congress to resemble, in a later age of the world.

conception, and understood principles of the alliance'—"an alliance never intended as a union for the government of the world, or for the superintendence of the internal affairs of other states." And this I say was accomplished.' 'Canning,' says his biographer, 'always protested against the system of holding congresses for the government of the world.'

As this noted speech declared, the object of Great Britain was accomplished in the potentates at Verona being deterred from declaring a war against Spain. The matter lay now between the two countries which were separated by the Pyrenees; and peace was preserved elsewhere. What his idea was of the peace to be preserved by Great Britain, he manifested in a speech delivered at Plymouth in the autumn of the same year, when the French and Spaniards were at war—1823. 'Our ultimate object was,' he said, 'the peace of the world; but let it not be said that we cultivate peace either because we fear, or because we are unprepared for war; on the contrary, if, eight months ago, the government did not hesitate to proclaim that the country was prepared for war, if war should unfortunately be necessary, every month of peace that has since passed has but made us so much the more capable of exertion. The resources created by peace are means of war. In cherishing those resources, we but accumulate those means. Our present repose is no more a proof of inability to act, than the state of inertness and inactivity in which I have seen those mighty masses that float in the waters above your town is a proof they are devoid of strength, and incapable of being fitted for action. You well know, gentlemen, how soon one of those stupendous masses, now reposing on their shadows in perfect stillness—how soon, upon any call of patriotism or of necessity, it would assume the likeness of an animated thing—instinct with life and motion—how soon it would ruffle, as it were, its swelling plumage—how quickly it would put forth all its beauty and its bravery, collect its scattered elements of strength, and awaken its dormant thunder. Such as is one of these magnificent machines when springing from inaction into a display of its might—such is England herself; while apparently passive and

motionless, she silently concentrates the power to be put forth on an adequate occasion.'

For that adequate occasion he kept watch as vigilantly as any advocate of war could have done; for he was not one to sacrifice the honour or influence of the country for the sake of the peace for which these were, and always must be, the guarantees. When it was necessary to speak and act again, Great Britain spoke and acted. The French overran Spain from end to end. The Spanish liberals had fewer resources, less union, and less hope than their enemy; and they were cruelly betrayed, not only by some few traitors from among themselves, but by the boastings of the French liberals, who had assured them that a large portion of the invading army would fraternise with the invaded, on touching Spanish soil. Instead of this happening, however, the French soldiery no sooner appeared from the passes of the Pyrenees than the royalist minorty in Spain were joined by such numbers as enabled them to cope with the constitutional forces, even without the aid of a foreign invader. The soldiery were certainly royalists; and they showed it now. The French entered Madrid on the 24th of May, within a month after the delivery, by Mr. Canning, of his exposition of the British policy in regard to this conflict. The liberals were still in possession of the person of the king, who was imprisoned by them at Cadiz. There he amused himself with attempting to make signals to friends in the blockading vessels, or outside the walls—taking a sudden fancy for sending up rockets and flying kites. Rockets and kites innumerable were ready to go up at the same moment with the king's, to perplex the royalist watchers outside. He obtained his freedom at last from the hopelessness of his enemies. They dismissed him from Cadiz on the 1st of October, to join his French friends; and two days afterwards, they surrendered the town, and gave up the cause. As it was not the cause of the whole people—as the clergy and the great body of the population welcomed the French—it is clear that no aid given by Great Britain could have saved Spain, or materially benefited it, while it would have precipitated war all over Europe, and violated the great principle of non-interference

with the affairs of other nations. Ferdinand immediately annulled, by proclamation, all the acts of the constitutional government—the whole legislation and administration of Spain for the preceding three years and a half; and thus, when Riego had been hanged on a very high gibbet, without being permitted to speak to the people, and when some treacherous generals had sworn new vows of fidelity, did the feeble king suppose that all was set right, and that affairs might now go on as if nothing disagreeable had happened. This was a mistake, of course; but it was not one to be wondered at. He knew nothing of the principles of liberty, and of the vitality which resides in them; and he desired to know as little as possible of the consequences of revolutions. There were some such consequences near at hand which soon compelled his notice.

The French ministry were, as Constant afterwards said, so afraid of the result of the invasion of Spain, that sustained as they were by the sympathy of almost all the rulers of Europe, they would have gladly drawn back, at the last moment, if the leaders of the Spanish cortes would have saved their honour by some 'moderate concessions.' It is probable that what the French called 'moderate concessions' might appear to the cortes an unprincipled and fatal yielding. However that may be, the French dropped all their timidity and doubt in the course of their sweep over Spain; and we find them next eager to subjugate, on behalf of Spain, the insurgent colonies in South America. Mr. Canning had declared in parliament, with a prospective view to such a juncture as this, that Great Britain would not tolerate any proposed cession, by Spain to France, of any of those colonies over which Spain had ceased to have an effective control. It could not therefore be now permitted that France should carry the war across the Atlantic, and attempt to capture those colonies which Spain could not pretend to be able to cede. On this occasion the British minister pronounced words which stayed, like a spell, the preparations for war on one side the Atlantic, while they kindled life and hope on the other, from the sea to the Andes, and over to the sea again. 'We will not,' said Mr. Canning, 'interfere with Spain in any attempt which she may make to re-

conquer what were once her colonies; but we will not permit any third power to attack or reconquer them for her.' It was a proud position which England held when this declaration was made. Her minister had declared his desire that she should hold a majestic station among the conflicts of the world; 'that, in order to prevent things from going to extremities, she should keep a distinct middle ground, staying the plague both ways.' Accordingly, when some young liberals in England had been eager to repair to certain of the South American colonies, as they were still called, to throw themselves into the combat for independence, Mr. Canning had brought in a bill to stop their proceeding, as one wholly irreconcilable with our relations with Spain; manifesting, however, very plainly, his expectation at that time that the colonies could not fail to achieve their independence. He now 'stayed the plague' on the other side. He applied, in October, 1823, to the French government for an explanation of its intentions in regard to the South American colonies, in return for a similar explanation from England; and it was in the course of this correspondence that he made the declaration quoted above. Other words of no meaner weight were put upon record.

The French minister, the Prince de Polignac, declared 'that he could not conceive what could be meant, under the present circumstances, by a pure and simple acknowledgment of the independence of the Spanish colonies; since, those countries being actually distracted by civil wars, there existed no government in them which could offer any appearance of solidity; and that the acknowledgment of American independence, so long as such a state of things continued, appeared to him nothing less than a real sanction of anarchy. . . . . That, in the interest of humanity, and especially in that of the Spanish colonies, it would be worthy of the European governments to concert together the means of calming, in those distant and scarcely civilised regions, passions blinded by party-spirit; and to endeavour to bring back to a principle of union in government, whether monarchical or aristocratical, people among whom absurd and dangerous theories were now keeping up agitation and disunion.'

Here was the principle and procedure of the Holy Alliance openly proposed for the coercion of the South American people. They were to live, not under such government as they might prefer, but under such as the rulers of Europe should impose upon them for their good. The reply of Mr. Canning was short, but large enough to enclose and exhibit *his* principle and procedure—that none but the parties concerned have any business with the form of government under which any people may choose to live; and that Great Britain was equally ready to recognise institutions founded by people and by kings. His reply was 'that, however desirable the establishment of a monarchical form of government in any of those provinces might be, on the one hand, or whatever might be the difficulties in the way of it, on the other hand, his government could not take upon itself to put it forward as a condition of their recognition.'

In the preceding declaration, it had been announced to Spain that consuls would be sent to South America, to protect the interests of British trade there—a list being furnished of the places to which they would be sent. These consuls were now appointed and despatched; and this was the decisive act by which Great Britain, following the example of the United States, recognised the independence of the South American provinces of Spain.

Calm and dignified as appears the attitude of Great Britain throughout these transactions, which have so largely determined the fortunes of the world, there was much struggle within the breast of the Queen of the Seas —the umpire, as she was now made—in the rivalship, not only of the old world and the new, but of the new and the olden time. Her foreign minister spoke with decision and clearness in all his correspondence, but it was from out of the midst of turmoil. He met with almost as much resistance at home as abroad; and he was twice on the verge of retiring from office, before he finally achieved the recognition of South American independence. Up to this time, Lord Sidmouth had retained a seat in the cabinet, without office: he now resigned it, partly because he could not agree with those of his colleagues who advocated the immediate recognition by his majesty of the independence

of Buenos Ayres.' Buenos Ayres and all the other struggling provinces might now date their declared independence from this year; and little as they then knew, or may know now, how to consolidate their freedom, the proud boast of the British minister was a true one which he uttered when, two years later, he gave an account of his policy of this time. The speech is one which ought to stand in every history of the period, for its effect upon every living mind. 'It was an era in the senate,' says one, applying what was said of the eloquence of Chatham. 'It was an epoch in a man's life,' says another, 'to have heard him. I shall never forget the deep moral earnestness of his tone, and the blaze of glory that seemed to light up his features.' It having been objected that the balance of dignity and honour among nations had been affected by the French occupation of Spain, which was thought to have exalted France and lowered England, Mr. Canning replied: 'I must beg leave to say that I dissent from that averment. The House knows—the country knows—that when the French army was on the point of entering Spain, his majesty's government did all in their power to prevent it; that we resisted it by all means short of war. I have just now stated some of the reasons why we did not think the entry of that army into Spain a sufficient ground for war; but there was, in addition to those which I have stated, this peculiar reason, that whatever effect a war, commenced upon the mere ground of the entry of a French army into Spain, might have, it probably would not have had the effect of getting that army out of Spain. In a war against France at that time, as at any other, you might perhaps have acquired military glory; you might, perhaps, have extended your colonial possessions; you might even have achieved, at great cost of blood and treasure, an honourable peace; but, as to getting the French out of Spain, that would have been the one object which you almost certainly would not have accomplished. How seldom, in the whole history of the wars of Europe, has any war between two great powers ended in the obtaining of the exact, the identical object for which the war was begun! Besides, sir, I confess I think that the effects of the French occupation of Spain have been in-

finitely exaggerated. I do not blame those exaggerations, because I am aware that they are to be attributed to the recollections of some of the best times of our history; that they are the echoes of sentiments which, in the days of William and of Anne, animated the debates, and dictated the votes of the British parliament. No peace was in those days thought safe for this country while the crown of Spain continued on the head of a Bourbon. But were not the apprehensions of those days greatly overstated? Has the power of Spain swallowed up the power of maritime England? Or does England still remain, after the lapse of more than a century, during which the crown of Spain has been worn by a Bourbon, niched in a nook of that same Spain—Gibraltar? . . . . Again, sir, is the Spain of the present day the Spain . . . . whose puissance was expected to shake England from her sphere? No, sir, it was quite another Spain; it was the Spain within the limits of whose empire the sun never set; it was Spain "with the Indies" that excited the jealousies, and alarmed the imaginations of our ancestors. But then, sir, the balance of power! The entry of the French army into Spain disturbed that balance, and we ought to have gone to war to restore it! I have already said that when the French army entered Spain, we might, if we chose, have resisted or resented that measure by war. But were there no other means than war for restoring the balance of power? Is the balance of power a fixed and unalterable standard? or is it not a standard perpetually varying, as civilisation advances, and as new nations spring up, and take their place among established political communities? The balance of power, a century and a half ago, was to be adjusted between France and Spain, the Netherlands, Austria, and England. Some years afterwards, Russia assumed her high station in European politics. Some years after that, again, Prussia became, not only a substantive, but a preponderating monarchy. Thus, while the balance of power continued in principle the same, the means of adjusting it became more varied and enlarged, They became enlarged, in proportion to the increased number of considerable states—in proportion, I may say, to the number of weights which might be shifted into the

one or the other scale. To look to the policy of Europe, in the times of William and Anne, for the purpose of regulating the balance of power in Europe at the present day, is to disregard the progress of events, and to confuse dates and facts which throw a reciprocal light upon each other. It would be disingenuous, indeed, not to admit that the entry of the French army into Spain was, in a certain sense, a disparagement—an affront to the pride—a blow to the feelings of England; and it can hardly be supposed that the government did not sympathise, on that occasion, with the feelings of the people. But I deny that, questionable or censurable as the act might be, it was one which necessarily called for our direct and hostile opposition. Was nothing then to be done? Was there no other mode of resistance than by a direct attack upon France; or by a war to be undertaken on the soil of Spain? What if the possession of Spain might be rendered harmless in rival hands—harmless as regarded us—and valueless to the possessors? Might not compensation for disparagement be obtained, and the policy of our ancestors vindicated, by means better adapted to the present time? If France occupied Spain, was it necessary, in order to avoid the consequences of that occupation, that we should blockade Cadiz? No. I looked another way, I sought materials of compensation in another hemisphere. Contemplating Spain, such as our ancestors had known her, I resolved that if France had Spain, it should not be Spain "with the Indies." I called the New World into existence, to redress the balance of the Old.'

In this celebrated speech, Mr. Canning appears to take his stand where he avowed his wish that his country should stand—'not only between contending nations, but between conflicting principles.' If we find in it a spirit higher than that of the allied potentates who would have ruled both hemispheres after the pattern of their antiquated ideas, we find in it also a tone lower than that of sympathy with the struggles for freedom which yet it was his policy to aid. When, as a listener tells us, 'his chest heaved and expanded, his nostril dilated, a noble pride slightly curled his lip, and age and sickness were forgotten in the ardour of youthful genius,' it must have been the consciousness of

power and of the soundness of his policy which inspired him; for he was certainly not, by his own profession, under the sway of emotions so lofty as the occasion created in others. It may be, however, that his sentiments were loftier than his professions. 'All the while,' says the observer, 'a serenity sat upon his brow that pointed to deeds of glory.' The deeds *were* glorious, however the doer may have assigned reasons of mere policy for them in an assembly which he could so sway as that they would have borne from him expressions of a higher political generosity. Perhaps he remembered how many were watching afar to catch up his words—the Holy Allies for their purposes, and many an eager malcontent for his; and this may have made him careful, in the midst of his emotions, to preserve his central stand between the imperial policies and the popular enthusiasms of the time. If so, he spoke wisely and well for such listeners, not only in his expositions of his principles and methods of peace, of non-interference, and of recognition of *de facto* powers, whatever their origin and date, but he offered them, in the course of the same chapter of events, a warning and a prophecy which has never been forgotten since, and is little likely to be forgotten now.

The occasion was the arrival of intelligence that Spain was interfering with Portugal, whose free constitution was hated and feared by the restored despot Ferdinand. Mr. Canning had formerly declared what our relations with Portugal were. If she chose to undertake any war on her own account, for the defence of freedom or any other cause, Great Britain had nothing to do with that; but, if she were attacked on account of her constitutional freedom, or for any other cause, Great Britain was bound by treaties, and by every obligation of good faith, to repair to her assistance. Such a case had arisen now—in December 1826. Some Portuguese regiments had deserted to the royalist cause in Spain. The Spanish government had repeatedly pledged itself to disarm and disperse these regiments; but it failed to do so, and permitted these regiments to make hostile inroads into Portugal, under the eyes of the Spanish authorities, and with every tacit assistance from them. On the night of Friday, the 8th of December, the

British government received from the princess-regent of Portugal an earnest application for 'aid against a hostile aggression from Spain; and the minister, whose first principle of administration had been the preservation of peace, was as prompt in action as if he had been eager for war. His own account of the affair is the shortest, plainest, and clearest. Short and plain as it is, it moved the heart of his immediate hearers first, and then of the nation, to an enthusiasm which will never be forgotten by those who lived at the time. 'On Sunday, the third of this month, we received from the Portuguese ambassador a direct and formal demand of assistance against a hostile aggression from Spain. Our answer was—that although rumours had reached us, through France, his majesty's government had not that accurate information—that official and precise intelligence of facts—on which they could properly found an application to parliament. It was only on last Friday night that this precise information arrived. On Saturday, his majesty's confidential servants came to a decision. On Sunday, that decision received the sanction of his majesty. On Monday, it was communicated to both Houses of Parliament; and this day, sir—at the hour in which I have the honour of addressing you—the troops are on their march for embarkation.'

There may be some wonder in Englishmen's minds at this day, as there certainly is in the minds of some foreigners, that this procedure and its explanation should have excited the enthusiasm that it did in the House and the nation. It may be said, truly enough, that the Portuguese are but two or three millions of priests and slaves, who have thus far incessantly shown themselves incapable of freedom; and that their alliance can never be of material advantage to England, for purposes of commerce or any other fellowship. All this may be true; and yet there may be still feelings in the national heart regarding Portugal which might account for the enthusiasm of the time. The very discussion of our alliance with Portugal carries back the imagination to the time of Charles II., when we became possessed of Bombay, and when our government declared, in the affectionate style of ancient treaties: 'The King of Great Britain does profess and

declare, with the consent and advice of his council, that he will take the interest of Portugal and all its dominions to heart, defending the same with his utmost power, by sea and land, even as England itself." There were remembrances of the treaties of Queen Anne's time, and the watch then to be kept against Spain and France, as now. The very words, 'our ancient and faithful ally,' always used when our relations with Portugal are spoken of, stir a sentiment in her favour. Again, there was the generous complacency felt by the strong when appealed to by the weak—the obligation being, in this case, not to disappoint the generous sentiment, because our good faith was engaged on the side of the appeal. Again, though the rational and firm desire of the British government and the majority of the people had been to preserve peace during the last anxious and troubled years, when despotism and revolution were everywhere in conflict, it had cost not a little to generous hearts, and also to minds not yet disenchanted from the spells of war, to refrain from rushing into conflict, and bringing the opposition of principles and prejudices to the arbitrament of battle. Mr. Brougham had said that 'Great Britain was bound over in recognizances of £800,000,000 to keep the peace;' and this consideration—of debt and exhaustion—availed while there was no strong impulse in a contrary direction. But the moment that the movement of troops became a movement of good faith and generosity, the spirit of the nation broke through its restraints of prudence, and its silence of neutrality; and the ministers' announcement of the transmission of troops to Portugal was received with acclamations which shook the world. The troops anchored in the Tagus on the 25th of the same month: but they were not wanted. The winged darts of the minister, his burning words, had done the necessary work with the speed of the winds. The revolted regiments slunk away from the frontier, and were dissolved. The French agent at Madrid stole away home; and King Ferdinand was profuse in his assurances of hatred of any power which would molest Portugal. More than that—this speech was one which no censorship could exclude, or delay on its passage to those whom it concerned. The newspapers passed from hand to

hand under the Spanish cloak; recitations of the Englishman's words went on in whispers under the bright Italian moon; and at Vienna and Warsaw, men's hearts swelled and their eyes shone as phrases from this speech were detected in common intercourse, and forthwith formed a sort of freemasonry among those who understood. The power lay in the warning and the prophecy which we mentioned above, and which we here present—the warning and prophecy of a war of opinion in Europe. After referring to his desire and maintenance of peace, when the French entered Spain four years before, Mr. Canning proceeded: 'I then said that I feared that the next war which should be kindled in Europe would be a war, not so much of armies as of opinions. Not four years have elapsed, and behold my apprehensions realised! It is, to be sure, within narrow limits that this war of opinion is at present confined: but it is a war of opinion that Spain, whether as government or as nation, is now waging against Portugal; it is a war which has commenced in hatred of the new institutions of Portugal. How long is it reasonable to expect that Portugal will asbtain from retaliation? If into that war this country shall be compelled to enter, we shall enter into it with a sincere and anxious desire to mitigate rather than exasperate; and to mingle only in the conflict of arms—not in the more fatal conflict of opinions. But I much fear that this country, however earnestly she may endeavour to avoid it, could not, in such a case, avoid seeing ranked under her banners all the restless and dissatisfied of any nation with which she might come in conflict. It is the contemplation of this new power in any future war which excites my most anxious apprehension. It is one thing to have a giant's strength; but it would be another to use it like a giant. The consciousness of such strength is, undoubtedly, a source of confidence and security; but in the situation in which this country stands, our business is not to seek opportunities of displaying it, but to content ourselves with letting the professors of violent and exaggerated doctrines on both sides feel that it is not their interest to convert an umpire into an adversary.' After describing the position of England as keeping in check the passions

of the world, and the horror of the scene if she were to descend from her post of arbitrament to lead the conflict, he continued: 'This, then, is the reason—a reason very different from fear—the reverse of a consciousness of disability—why I dread the recurrence of hostilities in any part of Europe; why I would bear much, and would forbear long; why I would, as I have said, put up with almost anything that did not touch national faith and national honour, rather than let slip the furies of war, the leash of which we hold in our hands, not knowing whom they may reach, or how far their ravages may be carried. Such is the love of peace which the British government acknowledges; and such the necessity for peace which the circumstances of the world inculcate. I will push these topics no further.'

There was indeed no need to push these topics further. Enough was said. From this moment it was understood throughout the world that whenever 'the war of opinion in Europe' should involve Great Britain, the aspirants to political freedom would be on her side. It was now clear —clear to all sovereigns and to all people—that England had completely separated herself from the Holy Alliance. Her foreign minister had carried out his main principle—the preservation of peace; and achieved the great practical purpose which lay nearest to it—the destruction of the Holy Alliance. These four years were a short time in which to have secured such objects, and to have placed such a fame as his on its pinnacle.

During those four years, a few events had happened among our foreign allies which it is necessary briefly to refer to. The princess-regent of Portugal has been mentioned, in the place of the old King John VI. That feeble king had for a wife the sister of the Spanish King Ferdinand; and for a son—the second son—the notorious Don Miguel, who has since so pertinaciously troubled the repose of his own and other countries. This wife and son, in the spring of 1824, imprisoned and threatened the king, who was obliged to throw himself upon the protection of the English, and to escape from his own family on board a British vessel in the Tagus. Miguel was sent away on his travels, and the king reinstated. A year afterwards,

the king acknowledged the independence of his great South American province of Brazil. Ten months afterwards he died; and his eldest son, Don Pedro, who had for a year been Emperor of Brazil, must now choose whether to remain so, or to return to Portugal as its king. The choice between the two crowns was his. He chose to remain on his western throne; but he did what he could to influence the affairs of the European kingdom. He abdicated the Portuguese throne in favour of his eldest daughter; and he sent over with her a constitution for Portugal. It was this constitution which enraged the French and Spanish courts, and caused the inroads upon Portugal which the British troops were sent to repel. The princess-regent mentioned above was the sister of the Emperor of Brazil, who, under her father's will, administered the affairs of Portugal till her young niece could enter upon her dignity and her function. When Mr. Canning's great speech was made, then, King John VI. had been dead some months; Don Pedro was on the throne of Brazil; Don Miguel was on his travels, caballing wherever he went; and their sister Isabella was princess-regent of Portugal, ruling the country in the name of the infant queen, and according to the constitution sent over by Don Pedro.

Other sovereigns had died—had slipped out of the Holy Alliance on the inexorable summons of death when they would not attend to that of freedom. The ex-King of Sardinia, Emanuel Victor, was no longer a European potentate; but he had been conspicuous in the earlier meetings of the allies. He died in January, 1824, leaving his brother, Charles Felix, on the throne. In September of the same year died the King of France, after enjoying his restored royalty fourteen years. His had been the unhappy lot to suffer adversity without being able to profit by it. Neither reverses nor restoration yielded any privilege of wisdom to him. His accession was as nothing to the world, and his death was nothing, except that he left his throne to be occupied by a brother, yet more unenlightened, and more despotic in his tendencies, than himself. The 'Nestor' of the Verona Congress, Ferdinand of Naples and Sicily, followed his relative of Sardinia in a year. The

Duchess de Berri was his grandchild; one daughter was wife to the King of Sardinia; another to the Duke of Orleans, whereby she became Queen of the French five years after her father's death. The King of Naples died of apoplexy; and the manner in which his death is notified, indicates the ideas which beset the death-beds of kings who live in dread of revolutions. 'The nuncio, the ambassador from Spain, the Austrian minister, and the French charge d'affaires, were introduced, with all the council, into the chamber of the king. His majesty was lying on his back, with his mouth open, but his features unaltered; the left hand, which was uncovered, showed some marks of extravasated blood. The guards at the palace, and other public places, were doubled, as a measure of precaution, but the public tranquillity was not disturbed for a single moment.'

This could not be said on occasion of the death of a more prominent member of the alliance than this Verona Nestor. On the 1st of December of this year, 1825, Alexander of Russia died, far away from his capital and his northern court. Some believe that he determined to pass the winter in the south, because he knew himself to be hemmed in by conspirators at St. Petersburg. However that may be, he died of fever on a lofty cliff overlooking a vast expanse of the Black Sea, while his successor was in imminent peril from a plot so extensive, that it was necessary to hush the matter up as speedily as possible; and so mysterious that, to this day, nothing is clearly understood about it in the world. Whether Alexander would have lived long, and ruled as he chose, if he had escaped the fever which cut him off at Taganrog, there is no saying. There is every appearance of his having ruled as he chose up to the time of his last illness. What he chose was a benevolent method. What he lacked was a sense and knowledge of justice. He was not even aware that benevolence may operate as cruelty when it is not enlightened and guided by a principle of justice. Alexander will not appear to posterity altogether as the bland, kindly, courteous Christian gentleman that he believed himself, and that he sincerely meant to be. He *was* bland, kindly, courteous, and a religious gentleman; but he was a pedant in intellect, and an oppressor on the throne. Nobody wept for

him, even while there was fear that his savage brother Constantine would succeed him. The savage was, however, induced to set himself aside—a wonderfully enlightened act, such as some who are not Calibans are incapable of. The younger brother Nicholas succeeded, and walked up the steps of the throne amidst a thousand daggers pointed at his breast. How he charmed them down, and how he made terms with those who held them, no one knows.

Thus would the Holy Alliance have been already decimated, if Canning had not before virtually dispersed the assembly. Soon after the arch-enemy, Napoleon, was in his grave, Londonderry followed, and carried with him the fate of the compact. Now five of the sovereigns had slipped away; and a plebeian man had arisen, who was too strong for all that were gone and all that remained. Here, then, we may drop all mention of the Holy Alliance.

It has been related that when the Verona Congress was summoned, the business proposed for its consideration was a consultation on the affairs of Greece. As it turned out, the subject of Greece was scarcely mentioned at that congress; which was occupied with the then secret topic of the French intentions towards Spain. The British minister's mind, however, was not the less open to Greek interests. In his youth he had written a poem on Greece—a lament on its slavery; and when the extensive Greek insurrection in 1821 seemed to open a prospect of liberty, no heart beat higher with hope and sympathy than his. He was, like a multitude of others, sanguine about the ability, physical and moral, of the Greeks to accomplish and maintain their independence. His duty as a minister, however, had to be considered before his predilections as a man. He adhered firmly to the principles on which he conducted his government in other cases. He preserved peace on the continent by strict neutrality in regard to the war in Eastern Europe; he enforced this neutrality by restraining individuals from rushing to Greece, to fight against Turkey: while he used all the power of his position to influence Turkey favourably, and to soften the horrors of the war. His countenance was on the side of liberty; and he was already pondering a scheme, which he carried out in a subsequent year, for the protection of Greece against the

destructive violence of her foe, while yet strictly enforcing his policy of non-interference with any affairs of other states in which Great Britain was not, as a state, involved. Turkey had the same claim to the possession of Greece that any other state has to its conquered dependencies; and however the sympathy of the enlightened world might be with the insurgent Greeks, no government had a right to interfere with the possessions of Turkey. Every assistance but political aid was, however, freely offered throughout Europe. Kings and people subscribed money for the redemption of Greek captives, and the support of Greek outcasts; and, in spite of all prohibitions of governments, many volunteers from France, England, Italy, and Germany, went to fight under the Greek leaders. Our own Byron perished in the cause—laid low by fatigue and fever before Missolonghi. The accomplished and beloved Santa Rosa, who had failed in the struggle to free his own Piedmont from Austrian rule, gave his efforts, and presently his life, to the Greek cause. At that time, the cause appeared desperate; and its misfortunes were cruelly aggravated by the disappointment of hopes held out from England of supplies of money and steam-boats. Perhaps the less said the better of the Greek loan negotiated in London in 1825, except that such incidents ought to yield their full lesson to future times, when similar occasions may occur. We are disposed to believe that the business was originally undertaken with a true heartiness in the Greek cause—with an enthusiasm which carried some parties beyond their calculations, and a due consideration of their means; and this kind of inconsiderateness is too likely to induce a reaction of selfish care, under which the pretension of benevolence and a love of liberty becomes a mockery. Thus it was in the matter of the Greek loan in London, which yielded even less of credit to the managing parties in England, than of money to the Greeks. Amidst the flow and ebb of sentiment and action among private parties in England, the government steadily held its position of neutrality, giving its endeavours in aid of humanity, and its undisguised good wishes to the Greek insurgents.

It has been told how complete was the humiliation of Algiers in 1816, and how a thousand and eighty Christian

slaves rushed from the interior to the shore, and from the shore into the boats, escaping from what they called 'a second hell,' to the British ships which were to carry them home. The victory appeared complete: but victors never know when they have done with such an enemy as the piratical state of Algiers then was. Another quarrel arose in January 1824. Captain Spencer was sent with two British vessels to arrange a dispute between the Dey of Algiers and the English consul, Mr. Macdonald. On his arrival, Captain Spencer found two Spanish vessels in the mole, recently captured, whose crews were made slaves of. Of course, the liberty of these Spaniards was demanded, under the treaty made with Lord Exmouth. No answer arriving in four days, Captain Spencer began to fear for the safety of the Europeans on shore; and, under a pretext of giving them an entertainment, he got them all on board one of his ships, while the other engaged the piratical vessel which had captured the Spaniards, took it, and set free seventeen Spaniards who were found on board. War against Algiers was declared; and a squadron under Sir H. Neale's command appeared before the town on the 24th of July. While waiting for a wind, the British commander received a message from the Dey, requesting negotiation. The negotiations gave little trouble, for the Dey was submissive. He engaged that no more European prisoners of war should be made slaves of, but that they should be treated with all humanity, and regarded as prisoners of war are in Europe: Here Great Britain closed accounts with Algiers, as it presently ceased to exist as an African state. A dispute arising between the Algerine government and the French in 1827, France sent forth a power which conquered Algiers, and in 1830 made it a French colony.

While Algiers was thus called to account, a little war was proceeding on another part of the African coast, which brought nothing but disaster and shame to the British engaged in it. Since the beginning of the century, the Ashantee nation had been rising in importance by conquest. The successive British governors of Cape Coast Castle had not preserved a steady course of policy with the Ashantees and Fantees: they had changed sides, and broken faith; and now the settlement was to receive the natural

retribution. These governors had been appointed by the African Company, whose settlements were all assumed by the British government in 1821. In 1822, Sir Charles M'Carthy was sent out as governor-in-chief of all the settlements which had belonged to the Company; and he presently found that he had the Company's Ashantee war upon his hands. He seems to have been wholly unskilled in African warfare. The narrative of the events of 1824 is a dismal story of mistakes and misadventures; of reliance on native auxiliaries, who failed in every possible way on all occasions; of inability to cross rivers, and entanglements in the bush; of messengers not knowing their way; deluges of rain being encountered; and of ammunition falling short, far from home. Sir Charles M'Carthy, after receiving a warning that his skin—or his skull, for both are reported—should adorn the great war-drum of Ashantee, actually divided his troops into four portions, and permitted the small force which he had conducted into the interior to be surrounded by ten thousand Ashantees. He was wounded in the breast by a musket-shot, and three of his officers laid him under a tree, where the enemy rushed, knife in hand, on the little party. By the intervention of a chief, one of the Englishmen, named Williams, was saved, after being wounded in the neck; and on turning round, the first thing he saw was the headless bodies of his three companions. All the English officers who accompanied Sir C. M'Carthy were killed or captured, except two. This happened on the 21st of January 1824. It was not till May that the British found themselves strong enough to brave the enemy in the field. The forts being garrisoned by seamen and marines, just arrived with the new governor, Colonel Sutherland, and the garrisons turned out to take the field, Colonel Chisholm attacked the Ashantees on the 21st, and drove them before him, after five hours' hard fighting. The advantage could not be followed up, for want of resources, and because the native allies deserted. Much fighting occurred between this time and the 11th of July, when the Ashantees were again defeated in the field, near Cape Coast Castle. They hovered about till the 20th, after which they were not seen again. Mutiny and desertion in his own army dis-

abled the Ashantee king from harassing the British, as he might still have done by his very numerous forces. He retired, leaving behind him bare and bloody fields, where he had advanced among rich crops of maize, bananas, yams, and plantains. At this time, beef was sixteen guineas a tierce at Cape Coast; and it was scarcely possible to obtain flour or bread at any price. The poor natives had, of course, no prospect but of dying by hunger.

The Ashantee king did not give up his object of possessing himself of all the country which lay between his northern boundary and the sea. During the two succeeding years, he made vast preparations in great quietness. The natives in alliance with England were much alarmed, and applied for assistance to Colonel Purdon, commanding at Cape Coast. They solemnly promised not to run away again, if they were assisted and led by the British; and this time one king and his forces were firm, and fought well. The final engagement took place on the 7th of August 1826, when the Ashantees lost, it was believed, not less than five thousand men. On the British side, the loss was eight hundred; and two thousand were wounded. The Ashantee king lost the golden umbrella of state, the golden stool of state, and much wealth of gold-dust, ivory, etc. The great talisman of the Ashantees was taken also, and examined. Under the external covering of leopard skin appeared a silk handkerchief; and within the handkerchief were two folds of paper, covered with Arabic characters; and within the paper was the head of Sir C. M'Carthy. One of the native kings was the captor of the talisman; and he refused to give it up. Humbling as it is to be worsted in these barbaric wars, and, indeed, to be engaged in them at all, their occurrence and incidents cannot be passed over in the history of the time. They are not only facts of the time, but they yield their lesson. Such wars occur in most cases, as in the present, from the lack of steadiness, ability, or knowledge, in the agents sent from home; and we shall be liable to such wars and such humiliations as long as due care is not taken to send fit and properly prepared agents to our meanest settlements in the most remote nooks of the world, as anxiously as to the most brilliant court in Europe. The bad faith of

Governor Smith in 1819 led to the slaughter of Sir C. M'Carthy in 1824; and the incapacity of Sir C. M'Carthy in 1824 caused the protraction of the war for two years, the difficulty of putting down the Ashantees at the end of that time, and all the horrors of famine which afflicted the territory during the intermediate period.

For nearly four years prior to 1826, there had been war between the British in India and the King of Ava, who ruled over the Burmese empire. The Burmese territory is above a thousand miles long, by six hundred broad; and it lies between Bengal and China, filling up the whole space. The king was as proud and as vain as barbaric sovereigns usually are when they know little or nothing beyond the bounds of their own territory; and he ventured to annoy his western neighbour, unaware of the chastisement that he must submit to in consequence. The Burmese pushed across the frontier, and committed thefts and violence, from time to time, for some years before the war; but these aggressions need not be supposed to be countenanced by the government, and they were not therefore made a subject of formal complaint. In 1823, however, the government picked a quarrel, slew some soldiers in the British service, imprisoned some British subjects, and, on being called to account, talked of invading Bengal. The Burmese actually entered the British territory, and set up forts, secured with strong palisades, from one of which a British officer and his force were driven back, with considerable loss, in the month of February. After this, war followed of course; and, of course, it was a disastrous war enough to the ignorant sovereign who had provoked it.

The principal seaport of the Burmese, Rangoon, was attacked on the 11th of May, and immediately submitted. The members of the government fled at the first shot; and the whole population of Rangoon, except one hundred persons, ran away into the jungle before the British could take possession of the town. After this, however, the conduct of the war became much more difficult from the security afforded to the enemy by the jungle and by the stockades which the Burmese threw up before every advantageous spot where they rested. 'It was a weary and dreary war; as war with a barbaric people must ever

be. It was no comfort that the Burmese lost, many times over, more men than the British; that they were always leaving their ammunition behind them, and laying waste their fields, that their enemy might not be supported by their soil. There was no comfort in all this; for it did not appear to hasten the arrival of peace. The climate and the country—the heavy rains, burning suns, jungles and swamps, were unfavourable to the invaders; and at the end of 1824, though they had advanced deep into the country, they did not seem much nearer to peace. The year 1825, too, was filled up with successes which went for nothing—though the British commander, Sir Archibald Campbell, did his duty well. One-eighth of the British troops were sick amidst the swamps and rains; and they were fired upon from the jungle, where they could not follow their assailants. In the autumn, there was an armistice, with abundance of fine speeches and compliments, ceremonious dinings and pretences of ardent friendship; but probably every one knew that the whole was a device for obtaining time—to recover the sick of the one party and replenish the means of defence of the other. Then followed the defeat of the great Burmese army by little more than a tenth part of their number; and then a treaty of peace which, after being duly signed, was found actually never to have been forwarded to the king. The alleged difficulty about this treaty, on the part of the Burmese, was that they could not pay the money demanded for the expenses of the war. They begged Sir A. Campbell to take rice instead, or to cut down and carry away the fine trees he might take a fancy to; but he insisted on the money, and the treaty was signed. When, after the next victory, the British took possession of Melloone, they found there the treaty which had never been forwarded to Ava. And they found also, in the Prince Memiaboo's house, the sum of 30,000 rupees (£3000). The treaty was forwarded to the commissioner, with a note saying that he had probably left it behind him in the hurry of his departure. The commissioner replied that in the same hurry he had left behind him a large sum of money, which he was confident the British general was only waiting a favourable opportunity to restore to him.

There is something extremely painful in such stories as these; in contemplating wars whose horrors are as great as those which are conducted by foes under an equality of civilisation, but which are yet made ludicrous by the childishness of one of the parties. Such wars do not appear, as far as our eastern possessions are concerned, to have been the fault of the more civilised party, any time within our century. There is no wish for war in a case like this, where the cost of money can hardly be repaid by any fruits of conquest; where the troops are cut off by climate and disease; where the survivors gain little glory by much hardship; and where the sufferings of the conquered country are such as must give concern to the hardest heart. In the present instance, all means of conciliation and negotiation seem to have been tried before war was resorted to. The necessity was one to which future generations are subjected by those who first establish a footing by force in a barbaric quarter of the globe. Such men little know what they do—to what an interminable series of future wars they pledge their country; what an embarrassment of territory, and burden of responsibility, and crowds of quarrelsome and irrational neighbours, they bring upon her; and how they implicate her in the obligation to superintend the fortunes of half a continent—or perhaps half the globe, till civilisation shall have so spread and penetrated as that the nations can take care of themselves, and co-operate with each other. It is thus with the British in Asia now. After the close of this Burmese war, a wise and benevolent statesman was wont to say in London, with a grave countenance, that we should be compelled to conquer China; and those who did not see as far as he did into our responsibilities on the field of Asia, and who knew how far he was from desiring conquest as a good, used to jest about him as 'the conqueror of China.' Before the day of the Chinese war arrived, the far-seeing statesman was in his grave; but his words remained in the ears of his friends, as a direction into the yet remoter future where our national responsibilities will still be acting when we are in our graves. Ours is, probably, not the only generation which will pass away before England's wars with barbaric states are ended.

Peace was concluded with the King of Ava, in February, on terms which were triumphant to the British. Their expenses were paid by the Burmese, and there was such a cession of border territory as would secure Bengal from incursions from the east. There was difficulty and delay about the restoration of the prisoners and the payment of the tribute; but every condition was enforced by Sir A. Campbell, and, on the 5th of March, the British troops turned their faces towards Rangoon, on their way back to Bengal.

While these eastern conflicts were taking place, Mr. Canning was earnestly occupied at home in preventing a war in the western world. Till our globe is better known, and newly discovered portions more accurately surveyed and defined than has been possible in the early days of geographical science, there will be danger of disputes about possession and boundaries between countries which have contributed to the discovery of new regions, and which may have been concerned in cessions of territory obscurely described. This has been the case with regard to the territory pertaining to one of the most important rivers in the New World—the Columbia; the possession of which has been repeatedly and vehemently disputed by the English government and that of the United States. When Mr. Canning came into office in 1822, the condition of the question was such that, as Lord Castlereagh told Mr. Rush, the American minister in London, war could be produced by holding up a finger.

The matter was really a very important one. The Columbia is the largest river which flows into the Pacific; its course from the Rocky Mountains being nearly nine hundred miles. Its entrance is somewhat difficult; but just within is a spacious and secure bay. The harbours along the west coast of North America are very few; not more than two or three outside the disputed territory; and far-seeing men are aware that every secure anchorage will be of inestimable value when the trade of the Pacific becomes what it is certainly destined to be. Again, the Columbia is now the only large river amidst the habitable regions of the globe which remains to be colonised; and of all possible considerations, none is so important to Great

Britain as her field of colonisation. Embayed in the coast of the disputed territory is an island—Vancouver's Island —two hundred and fifty miles long by fifty broad, which is fertile, has a climate like that of England, and abounds in coal of an excellent quality. In Mr. Canning's time the importance of this island was not so clear as it is now that we have obtained settlements in China, and extended our steam-navigation into the Pacific. The prospect was not then so distinct as now, of the activity of commerce which must arise in those regions, where our agents are already looking for coal and good harbours. At that time, the Oregon was a remote region beyond the Rocky Mountains, which it seemed scarcely possible for emigrants to reach, and whence there could hardly be any communication between them and the mother-country. Now that it is accessible from the other side, being only eighteen days' sail from our Chinese settlements, while commerce and navigation are quickening along the whole American coast, the aspect of the question is much altered. But even then the Oregon territory was seen to be no trifle, to be lightly given up by an insular nation, whose future welfare must depend incalculably on its means of colonisation; and the question of the right to Oregon was disputed with a proportionate warmth and pertinacity.

The claim of the United States was for a boundary which should give them not only the Columbia River but Vancouver's Island: bringing their coast so nearly to a junction with the Russian territory, as that British vessels could pass in and out only among islands belonging to the one or the other power. In 1818, the British commissioners, Mr. Robinson and Mr. Goulburn, would not concede this; and the American government would not modify the claim; and the parties, therefore, made an arrangement which could not but increase the difficulty of a future settlement. They agreed to leave the territory open to occupation by Americans and British for ten years; after which the subject should be resumed. As time drew on to the close of the term, Mr. Rush, the American minister, was directed to open the subject again with Mr. Canning; the United States government having, meantime, sent a frigate to the mouth of the Columbia, to

explore the river, and establish a post at its mouth, on what congress declared to be 'within the acknowledged limits' of the American territory. Mr. Rush waited on Mr. Canning, who was in bed with an attack of gout. Mr. Rush was admitted; they spread out maps upon the bed; and Mr. Canning was astonished to discover how great was the extent of the American claim. The next time they conferred, the American minister yielded two degrees of latitude, which would have left Vancouver's Island to Britain, but not the Columbia River. This offer was rejected by Mr. Canning, whose proposal of a modified settlement was in turn rejected by Mr. Rush. The more the affair was discussed, the more hopeless did any conclusion appear; and so angry did the people of both countries become, that the slightest irritability on the part of the negotiators would have instantly kindled a war. Mr. Canning's part was patience, and the recommendation of patience. He lost no opportunity of testifying his goodwill towards the government and people of the United States, and of restraining the jealousy between the two nations. The question was not settled in his time; but he did much in preventing a war, and in keeping open a way for an ultimate amicable settlement of a question whose importance to his country was greater than even he could be aware of.

Whenever the periods arrived—once in two years—for the renewal of the Alien Act, the question was asked in parliament by the opponents of the bill, whether it was proposed for the benefit of our own country or for that of foreign sovereigns. The subject is sufficiently connected with our foreign policy to find its place here; and especially because it was the prevalence of discontent and insurrection abroad, during this period, which made the seasons of the renewal of the Alien Act interesting and important occasions of discussion.

Every one who has travelled on the continent is ready to join in complaint and condemnation of the passport system there, by which every traveller is compelled to carry about with him a description of himself—his personal appearance, age, station, and occupation—and to have the statement certified afresh for every new country he enters.

The trouble and expense, the vexation and delay, the mistakes and inconveniences suffered by travellers under this system, are such as to make it hateful to everybody. No such system existing in England, it is clear that, during troubled times, every man who had reason to wish to escape notice, in any continental country, would rush to England, if he could, and there feel himself in safe hiding, if no method of registration of foreigners were adopted. Among these, the great majority might be such as, from their worth or their misfortunes, England would be proud and eager to receive and console; and such could have no reasonable objection to register their names and description on their arrival. Others, however, whether many or few, might be criminals or mischief-makers, of whose presence in the country it is absolutely necessary to the public security and good faith that the government should be aware. This much appears to have been undisputed, while the successive Alien Acts of 1820, 1822, and 1824, were under discussion in parliament. The provisions by which foreigners arriving in England were required to declare who and what they were, and to sign their names in the presence of an authority always on the spot, were not objected to by those who strenuously opposed other parts of the bills. By this registration it appears that, in 1820, the number of foreigners in England was no less than 25,000, very few of whom were engaged in commercial or other settled pursuits—a fact which seems to indicate the recent arrival of a large proportion of them. There was a constant increase of arrivals over departures, from an average of 266 to 1300 in a year, from 1819 to 1822, both inclusive. This extraordinary influx was, of course, owing to the revolutions and revolts on the continent; and the class of immigrants was exactly that which a Castlereagh and Sidmouth would watch with jealousy and dislike, and which would appeal strongly to the sympathies of the liberal leaders in parliament, and of the hospitable English people throughout the land. The objections made to the successive Alien Acts, and urged with force and ardour by some of the best men in parliament, regarded the power accorded to government of sending away obnoxious strangers, and its possible retro-

spective operation. The acts secured to the suspected alien a power of appeal to the privy-council; and he was to be dismissed openly, by proclamation, or by an order in council. The opponents of the bills required some security that the obnoxious foreigner should not be delivered up to his special enemies abroad, nor subjected on the spot to threats from subordinate officers; and they demanded that all foreigners resident in Great Britain before 1814 should be exempted from the operation of the acts. Their speeches were directed against the power of dismissal at all; though the necessity of some such power was not expressly denied. The replies showed that the government was under some effectual responsibility, and that the existence of the power of deportation was the surest way of rendering the exercise of that power unnecessary. The actual case seems to be that the power *was* unacceptable to the holders, even more than to the givers, who could not control its operation; that it was used as sparingly, and surrendered as early as possible; and that it is most improbable that it should ever be conferred again. The bills passed by decided majorities on each occasion; and on each occasion the minister had to report that there had been no abuse of the powers of the act, and that the number of aliens sent away was so small as to appear to testify to the efficacy of the legislation. In ten years, as Mr. Peel declared in 1824, only five or six persons had been sent out of the country, except a little band of agitators connected with Napoleon; and with regard to these cases, there was no dangerous or tyrannical concealment. In short, the acts, though in a certain measure questionable, worked well in an extraordinary time; and in 1824, Mr. Peel proposed a considerable amelioration in the provisions of the renewed act. At this time, the number of aliens in the country was 26,500; and some had been detected in devising plots for revolt in their respective countries, amidst the facilities afforded by a residence in London. The government had, however, sent away only one person (Count Bettera) within two years, preferring to stop the plots of agitators by warning and remonstrance; and they now felt able to recommend that the Alien Act should henceforth apply to no persons

who had resided in England for seven years. On the next occasion, in 1826, a much greater relaxation was made—the power of deportation was withdrawn from among the provisions, a fuller process of registration being substituted for it.

Great satisfaction was occasioned by this change. No one objected to the reasonableness of the demand that government should know where the foreigners who sought an abode in the country would be found; all agreed that the power of deportation had been carefully used, and guarded from abuse; and all were heartily glad when it could be given up, never, it was hoped, to be asked for again.

During this course of years, these thousands of foreigners largely influenced the mind of the English nation. It was a good thing to have among us men of great and various knowledge, art, and accomplishment. It was a good thing to have our minds, too long and too closely shut up in our own island and our own affairs, opened to take in new ideas, and awakened to a fresh curiosity. It was a good thing to have our sympathies appealed to, and our hospitable impulses strengthened, by the claims of so many perplexed and distressed strangers, who looked to us as their only refuge from despair. It was a better thing still to have the subject of government and constitutional liberties discussed at so many English firesides; so many careless minds fixed—so many timid inspired—so many ardent informed; and all, perhaps, made more aware than they could have been by any other means of the privileges of their own political position, and their duty in the preservation and improvement of it. If, in the next generation, England makes progress in constitutional freedom and social amelioration, it may be surmised that among the reformers and guardians of the national welfare are some whose eyes flashed, and whose hearts beat, when they sat on parents' knees, listening to the foreign speech, and sympathising in the fortunes of the exiled noble, and the indomitable patriot, of whom his own country was not worthy. Among the blessings of the peace may be reckoned such fraternisation as this.

CHAPTER VI.

Changes in the Ministry—Mr. Canning and Mr. Huskisson—The Debt and Taxation—Commercial Policy—Spitalfields and Navigation Acts—Parliamentary Topics—Negro Slavery—Government Resolutions—Circular and its Reception—Smith the Missionary—Close of the Session.

In looking back to the time of Mr. Canning's entrance upon office, in the autumn of 1822, it is clear—made clear by the light of subsequent events—that a new period in the domestic history of the country was opening. Many persons must have been aware of this at the time, if we may judge by the satisfaction expressed in various ways at the appointment of Mr. Robinson as chancellor of the exchequer, in the place of Mr. Vansittart, who left office with the title of Lord Bexley; and at Mr. Huskisson's becoming president of the Board of Trade, in January, 1823. Enough of the old elements was left to keep the timid and unobservant quiet, in the hope that things would go on pretty much as before, while Lord Liverpool was the head of the administration, and Lord Eldon was a fixture; and the Duke of Wellington represented England abroad, and the king was surrounded by so many of his favourite class of statesmen; and the Duke of York took a solemn oath occasionally against countenancing any attempt to relax the disabilities of the Catholics. It was a misfortune, to be sure, that the government of the country could not go on without Canning; without a man who was irretrievably pledged to the cause of Catholic emancipation; and that Mr. Huskisson was admitted into the cabinet, with his troublesome and dangerous notions about impairing the protection to native industry; but it was hoped that native industry was safe in the fostering bosom of the English nation; and some expressions of Mr. Canning's were laid hold of—expressions about the apparent impossibility of carrying Catholic emancipation under

any government that could be devised—as affording an assurance that, though the new minister was obliged to talk about the matter, he would never be able to do anything in it; and thus the tedium and loss of time in talking would be the extent of the evil. Besides, the two obnoxious men were 'political adventurers,' low-born, and therefore vulgar; and their influence would be kept down accordingly by their more aristocratic political connections. Such appears to have been the view of the ministerial party, at this time, throughout the country, from the king himself to the little country shopkeeper of Tory politics. The light of subsequent events shows us, however, that the case did not stand exactly thus. The king was growing morbid in temper and spirits—more addicted to a selfish and inglorious seclusion, and less interested about public affairs from year to year. The Duke of York was to die before him, and now in no long time. The lord chancellor was to find himself less influential, henceforth, in the cabinet and in the House of Lords. The Duke of Wellington was to prove himself as pliable before political necessity, as inflexible in military duty. Mr. Peel was to prove himself capable of education in the politics and philosophy of a new period. And Lord Liverpool himself was already so uneasy about the position of the Catholics that he did not, and could not, conceal from his intimate friends his conviction that their emancipation was only a question of time. He was now within five years of the date when, as is well known, he was making up his mind to resign his post to another who would carry the emancipation of the Catholics; which purpose was intercepted by the fatal seizure which withdrew him from public life.

As for the two 'political adventurers' whom it was so disagreeable to be obliged to admit into the cabinet, their present position was enough to mark, to the observant thinker, the change in the times. A new period must be opening when men of a new order are so indispensable at the council-board of the empire as that they are found seated there without effort of their own, and against the will of their colleagues. A new period was opening. Let us look at some of its features.

A time of war is a season of abeyance of social principles.

Amidst the disturbance of war, the great natural laws of society are obscured and temporarily lost. An exceptional state is introduced, during which the principles of social rule retire and hide themselves behind the passions and exigencies of the time. During such a season, the statesmen required are such as can employ, as substitutes for large principles of social rule, a strong and disinterested will, commanding a clear understanding and a ready apprehension. In such a season, the man is everything. He truly rules, if he has the requisite power of will, whether his aims and his methods be better or worse. Statesmanship is a post which in war, as in a despotism, may well make giddy all but the strongest heads—may relax any nerves but those turned to steel by the fire of an unquenchable will. A statesman in such times is required above all things to be consistent. Consistency—which then means an adherence to an avowed plan or system—is the one indispensable virtue of a statesman who rules during an obscuration of great social laws. There is no reason for vacillation or change when he acts from internal forces, and not under the direction of external laws conflicting with faculty put to a new school. While statesmanship was of this character—as long as the British nation lived under rule which had more or less of despotism in it, and while it was engaged in war—that is, during almost the whole of its existence—British statesmen were naturally, almost necessarily, of the aristocratic class. Leaving behind, out of notice, the administrators who were mere creatures of royal favour, and not worthy to be called statesmen, and coming down to later times, when political function had become a personal honour independently of royal grace, it was inevitable that English statesmen should be derived from a class to whom personal honours were most an object, and whose circumstances of birth and fortune set them at liberty for political action and occupation. Many influences favoured this choice of statesmen from the aristocratic orders: class habits of intercourse—class views and class interests. A lawyer's birth is forgotten in his eminence; so that low-born lawyers might rise, by the bar, to high political office; but otherwise a man must be, if not in some way noble,

highly aristocratic before he could be a statesman, under penalty of being called a 'political adventurer.' After the peace, a different set of conditions gradually developed themselves. When war is over—the critical period which admits the rule of the statesman's will—an organic state succeeds, wherein all individual will succumbs to the working of general laws. The statesman can then no longer be a political hero, overruling influences, and commanding events. He only can be a statesman in the new days who is the servant of principles—the agent of the great natural laws of society. The principles which had gone into hiding during the period of warfare now show themselves again, and assume, amidst more or less resistance, the government of states. Administrators who will not obey must retire, and make way for a new order of men. Amidst the difficulty and perplexity of such changes, a whole nation may be heard calling out for a great political hero, and complaining that all its statesmen have grown small and feeble; but it is not that the men have deteriorated, but that the polity is growing visibly organic; and a different order of men is required to administer its affairs.

When these new men come in, the old requisitions are still made—the old tests applied; and great is the consequent turmoil and disappointment on all hands. Everybody is troubled, except a philosopher here and there, who sees further than others. Consistency is talked of still, as the first virtue requisite in a statesman; and perhaps the man himself considers it so, and pledges himself fearlessly to consistency. But he soon finds himself no master of the principles of government, but a mere agent of laws which work themselves out whether he will or no; a mere learner under the tutelage of time and events. If he is a statesman from ambition, he must change the ground of his ambition; not exulting in framing and carrying out a political theory or system, but investing his pride in the enterprise of carrying out in the safest manner changes which must be made; doing in the best manner work which must, in one way or other, be done. As this new necessity opens before him—this fresh view of statesmanship presses upon him—he suffers more perhaps than all whom he dis-

appoints. He is in an agony for his consistency, till he has become fully convinced that the highest praise of a statesman under the new order of things is that he can live and learn; and long after he has himself obtained a clear view of this truth, he is annoyed by inquiries after his lost consistency. A little time, however, justifies him. On looking round, he finds that there is no politician of worth in any party, who has not changed his opinion on one or more questions of importance since entering upon political life; and that the only 'consistent' men—the only men who think and say precisely what they thought and said at the beginning—are the political bigots who cannot live and learn.

Under a new period like this, new men must come up—men who discern the signs of the times earlier and more clearly than politicians who are closed in by class limits and governmental traditions. Such new men would hardly escape criticism from their colleagues, even if belonging to the order from which statesmen are usually derived. Their being brought in as a sign of new times is a ground of jealousy in itself. But the new men must, from the very nature of the case, be from a class placed in a different position; and they have much to encounter. If wealthy, so as to be, in regard to fortune, independent of office, they are looked upon as upstarts. If without fortune, they are called adventurers. No matter how great their genius, how conspicuous their honesty, how unquestionable their disinterestedness, or even, how aristocratic their tendencies; if they live on the proceeds of office, and make statesmanship the business of their lives, they are 'adventurers.'

All the varieties referred to were found in the cabinet of 1823. There were some members of old and high families. There were some of middle-class origin who had risen by means of university connection and high Toryism, at a time when the war made a wider road to statesmanship than the natural laws of society permit in seasons of peace. Lord Eldon was of what his colleagues would have called low origin, if they had cared about it; but he had risen by the way of the law, and was exempt from criticism on that score. Mr. Peel was the son of a cotton-spinner; but his father, besides being enormously

rich, was a vigorous Tory; and the son was quiet and modest, submitting to be commended patronisingly by Lord Sidmouth, and never forgetting or concealing the fact of his origin. There can be no doubt that, though Mr. Peel has managed the fact with all prudence and honesty, and has long risen above the need of any adventitious advantages, he has felt the awkwardness of being the son of a cotton-spinner innumerable times in the course of his career. There is something in the way of his occasionally referring to the fact which shows this. It is painful to dwell on these features of the lot of statesmanship—almost shocking when we consider how far the honours of the position transcend any honours of birth. But it is necessary to historical truth to mark clearly the features of a new period of society; and this period seems to be the one when the hold of the aristocratic classes on the function of statesmanship was first loosened—the first opening made into the prospect of a future time when men of the people will be admitted, and must be welcomed, to a share in the management of the affairs of the whole people. The first who entered the government under this incipient change were sure to suffer; and to suffer on a point on which men of their kind are peculiarly sensitive. The men who had thus to suffer were Canning and Huskisson.

Canning was one of whom it might be said, according to ordinary notions, that he ought to have been a nobleman. High-spirited, confident, gay, genial, chivalrous, and most accomplished—he had the attributes of nobility, as they are commonly conceived of; and a nobleman he was—for he had genius. He held high rank in nature's peerage. But this was not distinction enough in the eyes of some of his colleagues, and the majority of their party. His father had been poor, though of gentlemanly birth; and after his father's death, his mother had become an actress. Not only was there an abiding sense of these facts in the minds of his colleagues, his party, and his opponents, but some spread a rumour, which met him from time to time in his life, that his birth was illegitimate. The same was said in the case of Mr. Huskisson; and in both cases it was false.

Mr. Huskisson was the son of a gentleman of restricted fortune, who possessed a small estate in Staffordshire.

The greater part of the property was entailed upon him; and he might have led the life of a country gentleman, if his talents and inclinations had not led him into another walk of life. As it was, he became private secretary to Lord Gower, the British ambassador at Paris, in 1790, when he was only twenty years of age. Not long afterwards, he was requested by Mr. Dundas, in the name of the cabinet, to accept the office of administering the Alien Bill—his knowledge of foreign languages and customs, and his gentlemanly manners, fitting him to conduct in the best mode the affairs of the immigrants landing in our ports. The Staffordshire estate descending to him about this time, considerably burdened with charges on account of the younger members of the family, he chose his way of life, declined that of a country gentleman, cut off the entail, and devoted himself to the public service. In his twenty-sixth year he became under-secretary of state for war and the colonies, under Mr. Dundas.

As for Mr. Canning, he was descended from an ancient family of gentry, one branch of which—that from which the statesman was descended—went to Ireland two centuries before his time, to live on lands presented to them by James I. Mr. Canning's father was called to the bar, but he never practised. Literature beguiled him from the pursuit of law; and he died early. Under the pressure of debt, he had consented to cut off the entail of the Irish estate, which he soon saw settled on his younger brother. He married a beautiful young lady of eighteen, of good family—Miss Costello; and their son, the statesman, was born on the 11th of April 1770, when the friend and colleague of his after-years, Mr. Huskisson, was exactly a month old. The father was wretched at the thought of having made his son landless; his cares had long preyed upon his health; and he died on his child's first birthday, leaving the young widow wholly destitute; and it was then that, seeing no other resource for a maintenance, she went upon the stage. It is not going aside from our purposes to relate these particulars of family history. The cry against the origin of Mr. Canning and Mr. Huskisson was so vehement, and so earnestly echoed by the people themselves, when given out by the aristocracy, that there

is clearly some strong significance in it, which makes it a sign of the times. The aristocracy ought not to have complained of the birth of either of these men; and the people ought not to have been discontented at the spectacle of men without hereditary fortune devoting themselves to the public service, while complaining of the influence of hereditary fortune in unfitting politicians for popular sympathy. What the people ought to have felt under such an incident of government, Mr. Canning indicated in one of his Liverpool speeches, after his election in 1816; a speech for which certain aristocratic families never forgave him, and for which they made his sensitive spirit suffer to his latest day. 'There is,' said Mr. Canning to his Liverpool constituents, 'yet a heavier charge than either of those that I have stated to you. It is, gentlemen, that I am an adventurer. To this charge, as I understand it, I am willing to plead guilty. A representative of the people, I am one of the people; and I present myself to those who choose me only with the claims of character—be they what they may—unaccredited by patrician patronage, or party recommendation. Nor is it in this free country, where, in every walk of life, the road of honourable success is open to every individual—I am sure it is not in this place, that I shall be expected to apologise for so presenting myself to your choice. I know there is a political creed which assigns to a certain combination of great families a right to dictate to the sovereign, and to influence the people; and that this doctrine of hereditary aptitude for administration is, singularly enough, most prevalent among those who find nothing more laughable than the principle of legitimacy in the crown. To this theory I have never subscribed. If to depend directly upon the people, as their representative in parliament; if, as a servant of the crown, to lean on no other support than that of public confidence—if that be to be an adventurer, I plead guilty to the charge; and I would not exchange that situation, to whatever taunts it may expose me, for all the advantages which might be derived from an ancestry of a hundred generations.'

It is easy to see why, after this avowal, his aristocratic comrades and foes dwelt much on what they called 'the

lowness of his origin.' The question is, why so many of the people were for ever taunting him with it, and with being an adventurer. It was not only, in this case, from that strong infusion of the aristocratic spirit into the English character which makes the town footman, the country shopkeeper, and the labourer in the hamlet, value the claims of birth as highly as any nobleman in the peerage. Mr. Canning and Mr. Huskisson were too well born to be subject to popular scorn on this ground. It was because they were not, till latterly, on the popular side. Men of the people, their tendencies were aristocratic; and they were seen in company, and supposed in league, with the Eldons and the Wellingtons—with the comrades of Sidmouth and Castlereagh. As time passed on, and disclosed the great truth that a new period had begun, the jealousy and dislike of the aristocratic observers of these two men became aggravated—mixed up as it was with fear of change; and, from the same cause, their footing with the nation improved; till the popular confidence in the case of Huskisson reached the point of calm trust and gratitude for eminent services; and in the case of Canning, a pitch of high enthusiasm which caused the news of his death to be received with an universal groan.

What dismay the introduction of the new men caused among the old is shown, with a sort of ludicrous pathos, in the correspondence of the lord chancellor at this time. He was always talking of retiring, on account of the disgrace the government was incurring by its advancing liberalism. At every new step taken, he threatened to retire; but he did not do it. He opposed and groaned over every proposition made by his colleagues; and it seems as if even the premier, his old friend, had grown tired of consulting him; and especially about the appointment of men whose measures and conduct he would be sure to disapprove as they developed themselves. The behaviour seems cavalier; but it must really have been difficult to know what to do with a man who would neither act heartily with his colleagues nor leave them. 'The *Courier* of last night,' writes the lord chancellor to his brother, 'announces Mr. Huskisson's introduction into the cabinet—of the intention or the fact I have no other

communication. Whether Lord Sidmouth has or not, I don't know; but really this is rather too much. Looking at the whole history of this gentleman, I don't consider this introduction, without a word said about the intention, as I should perhaps have done with respect to some persons that have been, or might be, brought into cabinet; but turning out one man, and introducing another in the way all this is done, is telling the chancellor that he should not give them the trouble of disposing of him, but should —not treated as a chancellor—cease to be a chancellor. What makes it worse is, that the great man of all has a hundred times most solemnly declared that no connection of a certain person's should come in.' (Lord Liverpool had declared that no friend of Canning's should come in.) 'There is no believing one word anybody says; and what makes the matter still worse is, that everybody acquiesces most quietly, and waits in all humility and patience, till their own turn comes.' It is plain that the world was rolling past the steadfast old chancellor, and carrying everybody with it but himself. The wind that it made chilled him as it swept by; and he was troubled at the void that it left about him. He called out, sometimes angrily and sometimes piteously, to the world, to come back and stand where it did before; but the world was fairly on its way now, and could not stop to listen to him: so the old man had to cheer himself with the comforts of his conscience—that most comfortable conscience which never gave him any trouble, but always so much solace! Perhaps this conscience of his would have stirred so far as to make him retire, if he could, amidst his many prophesyings, have foreseen how soon it would be said of the man now in question: 'Of Mr. Huskisson, in particular, against whom every species of ribald abuse has been cast, we have no hesitation in saying, that he has done more to improve our commercial policy during the short period since he became president of the Board of Trade, than all the ministers who have preceded him for the last hundred years.' But the chancellor still only talked of retiring; only wrote to Lord Liverpool that he had no wish to remain chancellor, believing, as he did, that all who remained—that is, acted with the two 'adventurers'—

would 'stand a very good chance of being disgraced.' And how was it, with regard to this matter of disgrace, to be brought upon the cabinet by this 'adventurer?' 'And it ought to be remembered to his honour,' the *Edinburgh Review* says of Mr. Huskisson, 'that the measures he has suggested, and the odium thence arising, have not been proposed and incurred by him in the view of serving any party purpose, but solely because he believed, and most justly, that these measures were sound in principle, and calculated to promote the real and lasting interests of the public.' A new period had indeed set in. The 'combination of great families' had been conscientious in their way; in discharging their responsibility to their 'party,' and toiling and endeavouring to achieve its 'purposes.' Now, here was a man out of their pale—and therefore an 'adventurer'—who ruled in his province for 'the real and lasting interests of the public.' When William Huskisson and his period came in, it was certainly time for Lord Chancellor Eldon to go out, for his period was indisputably expiring.

And now for the coming in of Huskisson's times.

During the war, when manufactures and commerce were in an artificial state, the British people had paid an amount of taxes, which now appears scarcely credible. What should we think of having to pay now, in taxes and loans, never less, and usually more, than a hundred millions a year. Yet this is what was paid from 1805 to 1818. In 1813, the amount paid in was £176,346,023. And in raising this amount of proceeds, great injury was done by the method of collection, which was expensive and burdensome to excess. Mr. Vansittart did not understand his business; and no one seems to have been able to teach it to him, or anxious to bid him learn it. He seems never to have perceived that to double a tax is not to double its proceeds. He did not consider that the lower ranks of society are the largest in number; and that numbers lessen with increase of rank, either of birth or money. He never could see that if a tax was doubled—a tax on any commodity or usage—a certain number of persons would give up the commodity or usage, from inability to pay the heavy tax; and that those who would cease to pay would be the poorer—that is, the larger class.

If Mr. Vansittart wanted more money, he doubled a tax, reckoned on double the former amount of proceeds, prepared and presented his estimates on this supposition—was, of course, disappointed, and had recourse to loans, or resorted to the sinking-fund; or in some way plunged deeper, till he could induce the House to increase some other tax. Such was the method of administration which gave advantage to seditious declaimers, and enabled Mr. Cobbett to carry with triumph, on the hustings at Norwich, resolutions in favour of applying the funds of the church and the crown-lands to the payment of the debt, abolishing all pensions, and suspending almost every kind of income, for purposes of relief from taxation. It was clear that the pressure of taxation was now too great to be borne; and that something must be done to arrest the demoralising discussion of the question, whether the debt could not somehow be got rid of.

Those days appear to us not very remote; yet it is difficult to believe how little remote they are when we call to mind the way in which the debt was talked over. A large number of gentlemen contrived to convince themselves and one another that the debt was a source of public wealth—a name or imagination which capitalists could trade in for mutual advantage, and for a share in which rich foreigners would pay hard cash into the country. Such men would not, of course, have the debt diminished. An opposite, and daily increasing party, which was not confined to those who found it hard to live, wanted to sweep it away altogether. It was not uncommon, in those days, to meet with persons who called themselves politicians, who would say openly: 'Ah! you know, after all that can be said, we must come to the sponge.' The Cobbetts, Hunts, and Wolseleys of those days—the shrewd, the ignorant, and the weak leaders of the people, not only spoke strongly—as they might reasonably do—of the hardship of the annual payment of the interest of the debt, but misled multitudes as to the origin and nature of the debt itself. They not only exposed the badness of the principle of mortgaging the industry of future generations; and showed the mischief of diverting annually from productive purposes so many

millions as go to pay the fundholder; and ridiculed the sinking-fund; all this was fair enough; but they went so far as to represent the debt as incurred by the aristocracy, for personal objects hostile to the national interest; and they clamoured for a confiscation of the property of the crown, and the church, and the aristocracy; and failing these, for an expunging of the debt, throwing the support of the fundholders wholly on the aristocracy. There were others who understood the origin and progress of the debt rightly enough; and who saw that, however indefensible was the great increase of it during the wars of the last century, the most vast and rapid increase of it took place during the present century, when this prodigious expenditure had become indispensable to our national existence. While mourning over the American war, and other unhappy conflicts, which raised the debt from 129 millions in 1775, to 360 at the Peace of Amiens in 1802, they remembered that the vital struggle which ensued, between 1803 and the overthrow of Napoleon in 1815, added 420 millions to the capital of the debt—an addition for which it seems impossible to blame, with any show of reason, any class or party at home. But those who understood accurately the origin of the debt fell into strange errors about the means of its liquidation. Some trusted to the sinking-fund, even up to this date and beyond it. They did not see the double mischief connected with the sinking-fund; that while there was in reality any surplus revenue applicable to its purposes the government would, almost of course, help itself to the money under any temporary embarrassment, to avoid proposing new taxes while the people found it more and more difficult to pay the old; and then that the commissioners of the sinking-fund would borrow to make up the deficiency. Absurd as it appears in the case of an individual, that a man should borrow in one direction to pay a debt in another—paying perhaps higher interest to his new creditor than to the old—and should then call for congratulations on the decrease of his first debt, this is exactly what was done by the government prior to this date. Mr. Pitt no doubt honestly believed that the money accruing to the sinking-fund would be allowed to accumulate untouched; but Mr.

Vansittart declared in 1813 that the sum produced by the sinking-fund 'would be an instrument of great force in the hands of parliament, which might lead to the most important results;' and Lord Londonderry, just before his death, avowed that 'he had never represented the sinking-fund as a saving to be held sacred, but as a mode of placing a large sum at the disposal of parliament, to be by them disposed as might be thought most equitable, whether for the relief of a pressing exigency of the present day, or for the security of posterity.' While this extraordinary laxity of profession was used by members of the government, there was no less laxity in the actual management of the so-called fund. The operations were curious enough in many ways; but the result was the most curious of all. While ministers were announcing that the sinking-fund had paid off nearly twenty-five millions of the debt since 1817, the public were wondering how it was that the interest of the debt was heavier by £700,000. By borrowing with all manner of ingenious and costly devices, on the one hand, to pay on the other, the managers had actually increased the debt by seven millions and a half since 1817, and had added £700,000 to the interest. Since the close of the war, the increase was upwards of eleven millions. Something must be done.

One process which had been begun in 1808 for the liquidation of the debt has acted well, as far as it has gone; and it is probable that whenever any effectual reduction of the debt takes place, it will be through a large extension of this method—that of converting permanent into terminable annuities—at some present sacrifice, of course, but with certain future relief. But this present sacrifice, this immediate increase of charge, was the objectionable feature at the date of which we write, when the public safety required a lightening of the burdens of the people. In Sir H. Parnell's *Financial Reform* there is an observation, that 'if all the loans which have been raised since the beginning of the war of 1739 had been borrowed in annuities for ninety-nine years, their extinction would already have commenced. We should now have been outgrowing the debt from year to year, and feeling its shackles falling off incessantly from our productive

industry. And we may prepare for the emancipation of a future generation now, by adopting this method in our day; by making some increased sacrifice to pay, for the sake of our children, the debt incurred by our fathers. Mr. Vansittart witnessed the action of this method; and so did Mr. Robinson, his successor; and both declared their approbation of it. Yet, driven hard by the exigencies of the times—that is, by the popular discontent—they had recourse to a directly opposite method of dealing with the debt—burdening posterity, for the sake of a very slight temporary relief; and they found not a few followers and admirers who praised both schemes in the same breath.

The sum required in 1822 for the discharge of half-pay and pensions was five millions. If these had been let alone, the whole would have fallen in in about forty-five years, from the dying off of the recipients. But the chancellor of the exchequer conceived a project of converting these annually diminishing claims into a set of permanent annuities for the term of forty-five years; fixing this permanent annuity at £2,800,000, and providing by its immediate sale for the discharge of the half-pay and pensions, with some considerable surplus. Nobody bought in the first year. In 1823, the Bank of England bought a portion of the long annuity, on terms which afforded the people of 1823 to 1828 an amount of nine millions and a half, at the expense of those who were to come after them, and who are burdened with an annual payment of £585,740 for the thirty-nine succeeding years. Mr. Vansittart had devised this scheme; and Mr. Robinson believed himself obliged to carry it through though the circumstances of the times made the bargain with the bank as disadvantageous in its terms as it was objectionable in its principle. Strangely enough Mr. Robinson in bringing forward his budget in this spring of 1823 reckoned twice over a sum of two millions expected to accrue from this arrangement; so that the declared surplus of five millions which was destined to reduce the debt was at once sunk to three.

Such was the state of the affairs of the debt, at the date of the accession to office of the new men. The country was less afflicted than it had been; and there was a decided revival in manufactures and commerce. But the pressure

of taxation was one which the nation was beginning to declare that it could not and would not bear, after eight years of peace; and so loud was the cry for reform of parliament, as the shortest way to a remission of taxation, that it was time for government, not only to consider, but to show what could be done. The new men were as heartily annoyed by all mention of reform of parliament as their predecessors and their colleagues. They must set to work to obviate it by improving the condition of the nation.

There were two ways of doing this. One was to lessen the amount of the taxes; the other was to increase the ability of the people to pay them. Both objects were good; but in the first there was nothing new—nothing expansive—nothing significant of a better time. The minister who lays on new taxes, always talks about taking them off by-and-by: and when they are taken off, there is so much saving to so many individuals—so much left free for investment in productive industry. The process is good; and it is pleasant to everybody, from the humblest tax-payer, who saves his penny in his weekly wages, to the chancellor of the exchequer himself, who announces welcome news, and sees smiles on every face in return. This was Mr. Robinson's process; and he went into it with a temper so benign and sanguine, that he did not always come out of the experiment with such credit as he anticipated. He became known by the name of Prosperity Robinson, when it was found, year after year, that he underrated drawbacks, and overrated the public condition; and that he was only too like himself when he exulted in the reduction of the debt during the years which had actually added above seven millions and a half to its capital. In the spring of 1823, however, the minister's tendency to optimism was not fully known; and his announcement of a large reduction of taxation was received with enthusiasm, though his scheme included the objectionable arrangement with the bank, for the commutation of the half-pay and pension charges. Several small taxes, annoying in their operation, were taken off altogether, at a sacrifice of less than £78,000; such as taxes on mixed services, on occasional gardeners, on the lower order of taxed carts, and some of the horses, mules, and ponies, used in trade and

husbandry. There was a reduction of the window-tax; fifty per cent. was taken off the taxes on servants, carriages and horses; and Ireland was relieved of the whole of the assessed taxes. In the preceding year, some considerable reductions had been forced upon ministers, who had taken off the greater part of certain very onerous taxes—as those on salt and leather, and the annual malt-tax. On that occasion, the late chancellor of the exchequer did not see how the labouring-man needed pity for paying from 20*s.* to 25*s.* a year for salt; since it was paid 'in almost imperceptible portions' from his weekly wages; but he was compelled to try what the labouring-man would think of the change. Now, a year later, a new minister voluntarily and exultingly came forward to repeal taxes; and the labouring-man, telling over his weekly wages in his cottage, began to feel that there was good, even to him, in peace above war.

The other way to improve the condition of the nation was by increasing their ability to pay their taxes; by expanding their trade—giving them an increased command of the materials of their manufactures, and an improved security of production, sale, and returns. In every direction, the agriculture, manufactures, and commerce of England were hampered by laws and arrangements which, originally intended for safeguards, had become restrictions. The food of the whole people was to be grown in their own island; and its supply was at the mercy of the weather, and of the changing state of men's minds under the fluctuation of their fortunes: so that the prices of corn and other food, the rent of the rich and the loaf of the poor, rose and fell in extremes which destroyed all confidence and all regularity; whereas, if the world were laid open to the constant demand of the nations, the abundance of one region would supply the deficiency of another, and a natural balance would be established. As far as was possible, the same ancient plan was pursued with regard to the materials of manufactures. Instead of a liberty of purchase of hemp, silk, wool, timber, etc., where they could be had best, and when they were most wanted, all sorts of impediments were interposed in the way of obtaining supplies; and production was rendered difficult and

scanty in proportion. Instead of a liberty of sale of all productions, the producers were hampered by treaties and laws, the jealousies of governments, and the meddling of rulers, till the markets of the world were brought into an artificial state which discouraged enterprise and industry, by making them cost more, in money, risk, and anxiety, than they were worth. In truth, the methods which had been devised when states were young and half-peopled, and rulers were inexperienced, were now outgrown. They were applicable no longer; and now, when wars were over for the time, and countries were fully peopled, and inventions sprang up every day, and arts and economy improved from year to year, it was necessary that men should have more liberty to produce and to exchange. Society was now large, full, and busy enough to come under the great natural laws which regulate communities of men as infallibly as they regulate systems of worlds; it had outgrown the superintendence of a handful of managers who once thought it their business to dispense all its affairs according to their own notions. When Adams the mutineer found himself in command of the little company from the *Bounty*, and ruler of their island, he began with a sort of paternal rule. He dictated what clothes his subjects should wear, and how they should enclose their gardens, and how much land should be set apart for growing yams, and how much for maize; and he might even order this plant to be watered, and that to be sheltered, and another to be carefully reared in a seed-bed; but when his little company had spread out into a tribe, he could rule them no longer as a father, but as a legislator and judge. His business in his old age was to frame, with their concurrence, rules of behaviour, which he was to see enforced; but when he sat before his cottage on the knoll, and looked abroad over their harvests, spreading as far as he could see, and saw the people thronging in their market, and their boats going to and fro among the islands in the sea, he could no longer dream of such a task as regulating their households, and their fortunes. He must leave them to till their fields, and choose their fishing-grounds, and dye their webs, and sell their cargoes, in the way they might find answer best to them; certain that what

was most conducive to the prosperity of each individual family, must tend most to the welfare of the whole community. Thus, there had been a time in England when the king and his advisers had ordained what clothes should be worn by the different classes of the people; what prices they should give for their food; what wages they should receive for their labour. When that close interference had to be given up, the voice and hand of the sovereign and the legislature were still heard and felt among the most important transactions of production and trade, spoiling what they could no longer regulate. At the time we are contemplating, the mischief was found to be pressing very heavily. The taxes were burdensome; the supply and prices of food were precarious and fluctuating; and when the sentinels of war were withdrawn from the boundaries of kingdoms and continents, it was found that commerce could not pass, on account of restrictions at home. The nation cannot be said to have had a clear view and purpose as to what should be done to improve its ability to pay its taxes; nor did the mind of any statesman, perhaps, embrace the whole scope of the reforms now to be instituted; but the stir throughout the country and in parliament, during this session of 1823, showed the general sense that something must be done; and Mr. Huskisson was the man who saw furthest into the nature and necessity—the philosophy and fact of the case. The aim at freedom of trade was not at present a great national idea, like that of reform of parliament. Men were going unconsciously into the great change which the next twenty years were to accomplish; but, on looking back to this session of 1823, it seems that we may date thence the emancipation of trade, not only because Mr. Huskisson then entered the cabinet to begin the work, but because the need of the work being begun brought Mr. Huskisson into the cabinet.

The novelty and terror were not, in this case as in many, in the name of the measures required. The opponents of Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform started back from the very names; but almost everybody professed to think 'a more liberal commercial policy,' and 'the removal of restrictions on trade,' very good things.

The difficulty was, that every step taken to attain these good objects was desperately contested. The 'protection' of each particular interest was so fought for, that to free any one from restriction was as difficult as if the entire process had been opposed in the abstract. In a subsequent session, the House, which had already begun to jest on the tendency of each interest to recommend 'a liberal commercial policy' for every one but itself, was brought to a full sense of the absurdity of this by the zeal of an honourable representative of a place abounding in glass-houses. He had helped to take off protecting duties from a great variety of articles in which his constituents were not particularly concerned; but when green glass bottles were mentioned, he started to his feet, and vowed he would defend to the last the protection to green glass bottles. This was one difficulty. Another was that few persons had yet learned to look at the subject in the large. While multitudes wished for a relaxation, few dreamed of an entire removal of restrictions; and while this lasted, reforms worked imperfectly, and men could not agree how much to aim at.

This year we are struck by the fact that numerous petitions were presented to parliament for the repeal of the import-duties on foreign wool, while the manufacturers, the actual petitioners, would not hear of the free exportation of wool. The answer they received was, that the import-tax now yielded a revenue of £400,000, having risen to that from £250,000; that this seemed to show—one cannot now see how—that the duty did not injure manufactures, while it was very important as revenue; but that foreign wool should be admitted free whenever the manufacturers would agree to a free exportation—a point of wisdom which they had not attained. An improved Warehousing Bill was passed this year, with much difficulty. Some curious facts appeared about our trade with India, which pointed further than people then saw to the changes which the West India Islands were to undergo hereafter. Mr. Whitmore desired an inquiry into the duties on East and West India sugar. He showed that before the trade with India was rendered open, it had gone on in its own small way—drugs, spices, silks, and a few muslins, being

sent from India, and paid for with bullion from Europe. Now, since the opening of the trade, the whole business had assumed a new aspect. Instead of bullion, India received from us woollen goods to the amount of a million and a half. A more remarkable thing was that, instead of sending us her fine muslins, India sent us the cotton to make them of; and this cotton was spun, woven, sent back, and sold on the spot, cheaper than the inhabitants could sell muslin to each other. The exports to India of manufactured cotton amounted already to above a million per annum. The thing now desired was, that India should be permitted to pay for our manufactures in her own product of sugar—having little other means of payment, and our trade with that vast and populous country being henceforth limitable only by restriction on her means of paying for what we could supply. It was not likely that Mr. Whitmore would obtain his object, implicated as it was with the subject of West India slavery; but he had the honour of driving Mr. Huskisson himself to his wits' end to defend the existing state of the sugar-duties, and get rid of the facts about India; and it was one of the long series of preparatory steps which are still leading us on towards an ultimate free-trade in sugar, through a wilderness of difficulties caused by former vicious restrictions, not only on freedom of trade, but on the liberty of man.

The silk manufacturers stirred this year against the bad political economy of a former reign. When the silk manufacture was almost entirely confined to Spitalfields, statutes were passed empowering the magistrates to fix the amount of wages, and settle a good many other matters which lay pretty widely out of their province. The manufacture could not flourish under this kind of superintendence, as it now did in other parts of the country where no such meddling was authorised; and it was clear that the Spitalfields manufacture must perish utterly, unless left free to compete with that of other districts. The reasonableness of this was clear enough; and the House seemed ready to repeal the restrictive acts when Mr. T. Fowell Buxton presented a petition signed by eleven thousand journeymen silk-weavers, who supposed that their bread

was gone if their wages were no longer to be fixed by law. The honourable members were not convinced, but they were daunted by the 'dismay and alarm,' of the journeymen; and some of them begged for delay. Mr. Huskisson saw no use in delay in following up a principle which all agreed to be sound; but, sound as the principle was declared to be, the majority on the second reading of the bill was only 8, in a House of 128. On the third reading, the majority was still only 13. This is sufficiently remarkable at a date so late as 1823; but the ultimate fate of the bill is a yet more wonderful circumstance. The Lords were afraid to alter old laws in a hurry. The lord chancellor especially, while professing not to understand much of political economy, implored their lordships not to touch any old laws without abundant delay. The peers introduced several amendments into the bill, which would have continued to the magistrates the power of fixing wages, while kindly permitting the manufacturers to invest their capital where they pleased, instead of confining them, as hitherto, within a distance of ten miles from the Royal Exchange. If the bill thus amended had passed, its operation would have been, of course, to drive the capitalists to some manufacturing district where they could pursue their business free from magisterial interference, leaving the eleven thousand petitioners unemployed and helpless. But the promoters of the bill disowned it when loaded with vicious amendments; and it dropped for the time. The historical fact of its discussion at so late a date of our history, when Mr. Huskisson said he could hardly account for the existence of such a statute, is worth the trouble it gave at the time, and the small pains of noticing it here.

The most important change which took place now, or had ever taken place, in relation to commercial freedom, was opened, to parliament and the country, on June the 6th, by Mr. Huskisson, in a committee of the House.

The system of Navigation Acts had begun in Cromwell's time, when it occurred to the statesmen of the day that an everlasting commerce might be secured to the shipping of Great Britain, if the productions of Asia, Africa, and America were permitted to be brought in only in British

ships, commanded only, and manned chiefly, by British subjects. A law to this effect was made in the 12th year of Charles II.; and the same law imposed duties on European produce also, if brought in foreign vessels, which secured the monopoly to British shipping. The plan appeared to work well till after the American war; but then, American ships, which had before enjoyed the privileges of those of the mother-country, were excluded with those of all other foreign states. They came to England in ballast, while British vessels carried cargoes both ways. It could not be supposed that they would submit to this; and the United States government imposed the same restrictions on British ships that their own vessels suffered under. Then the ridiculous spectacle was seen of the ships of both countries going in ballast, in order to return with cargoes; the consumers of the cargoes having, of course, to pay for the expensiveness of the voyage. The double freight was actually paid by the consumers of both countries till 1815, when the two governments agreed to repeal the restrictive duties. The wedge was now introduced which was to break up the monopoly all over the field of commerce. In 1822, Mr. Wallace, president of the Board of Trade, carried five bills which relaxed the restrictions to a considerable extent with regard to the shipping of other countries. This was done amidst the most doleful prophecies of the ruin of our foreign trade, and the most angry remonstrances on behalf of the shipping interest of England; but the thing must be done, for Portugal had retaliated; the Netherlands had decreed a premium of ten per cent. on all merchandise imported in Dutch bottoms, to take effect at a certain date, if England did not change her policy; and Prussia had raised the dues on all British vessels, and declared her intention to retaliate further, if England did not surrender her monopoly. The immediate consequence of such relaxation as took place in 1822, was a stimulus to commerce which surprised the croakers. They insisted that the briskness would not last; but it was necessary to try; for Prussia was firm in her retaliatory intentions, while expressing an enlightened desire for freedom of commerce. The Prussian minister declared, in his note

on the subject, the principle held by his government—'that reciprocal commercial restrictions were reciprocal nuisances, prejudicial to all nations having reciprocal interests, and particularly to those engaged in extensive commerce; and that the policy of Prussia was to substitute, in the place of reciprocal prohibitions, reciprocal facilities.' The time was now come for deciding whether the vessels of all states were to go empty one way, charging all consumers double freight; or whether they should fetch and carry all they could for the same cost, to the great extension of commerce, and in natural justice to the consumers of all countries. It hardly needs to be pointed out that foreign states would soon have agreed to dispense with British shipping, as far as possible, and to supply one another by means of a less expensive commerce than hers. The time was now come for deciding on the principle, and decreeing the destiny, of our commerce; and Mr. Huskisson, on this 6th of June, proposed his Reciprocity of Duties Bill. By this bill all duties and drawbacks were to be imposed and allowed on all merchandise equally, whether carried in and out by British or foreign vessels. A provision was added, that the king in council should still have power to reciprocate restriction. Under this authority, the former restrictions were to be continued towards any state which should continue to impose disadvantages on British shipping. The case was so clear—the pressure of the circumstances, if not the principle—that the bill passed the Commons by a majority of 5 to 1—75 to 15. One significant remark was made, just before the division, which should not escape the notice of an observer of those times. 'Mr. Stuart Wortley thought that the principles which now began to work in regard to commercial regulations, must ere long be applied to those of agriculture.' The great change now 'began to work;' and this session will ever be a marked one accordingly.

The outcry of the shipowners was great—almost as loud as that of the agricultural interest. Their grievances were real; but they mistook their remedy. The most important of their body possessed ships which were built when the materials of shipbuilding were dear; whereas ships were now daily brought into use which were built

with comparative cheapness. Some of these cheaper ships were British; but the foreign ones had the further advantage of their timber not being subject to the heavy duty on Baltic timber, which our shipowners had been able to bear during the war, but now found very onerous. Mr. Huskisson noticed this, in his closing speech on the Reciprocity Bill, and pointed to a time when this duty might be remitted. He saw, what the shipowners could not then see, that their hope of revived prosperity lay in a further liberation of commerce; and not in an attempted return to old restrictions, now become impracticable. Mr. Huskisson offered a benefit to the shipping interest which deprived them of all reasonable ground of complaint; but they would not accept it. He offered to grant to British shipbuilders a drawback equal to all the duties paid upon the materials used in constructing and equipping their vessels. The shipowners declined this, in the fear that a stimulus would thus be given to shipbuilding at home. It is plain that they could not have at once cheap ships and the monopoly claimed on account of dearness of build. They could not now have the latter, and they refused the former advantage; and bitter were their complaints, at that time, as they are even at this day. But in a little while they ceased to obtain any pity from those who knew the facts of their case. From the time of the passage of the Reciprocity Acts a rapid increase in British shipping took place. In the last nineteen years of the restrictive system, the increase in British tonnage was ten per cent.; while, in the first twenty-one years after the passage of the Reciprocity Acts, the increase has amounted to forty-five per cent. We may rejoice, therefore, that while the whole of the rest of society has been enjoying the benefits of cheapened freight, and consequent extension of commerce, the shipping interest has derived its share of advantage from the change.

The more vital question of reform of parliament was brought forward again this year, with evidences of increasing strength. On the presentation of a petition from the corporation of London in favour of parliamentary reform, brought to the bar of the House by the sheriffs, Lord John Russell declared that 'it gave him infinite satisfaction to

see the growing interest which all classes were taking in the question of reform.' The Norfolk petition—the extraordinary one carried by Mr. Cobbett by means of the discontents of the farmers—excited due horror and ridicule in the House by its proposed attacks on the church and the funds; but the great 'sensation' of the session was caused by the presentation of the Yorkshire petition for reform. It measured 380 feet in length; and it was signed by two-thirds of the freeholders of Yorkshire, including a large majority of the aristocracy of that great county. This circumstance shows how important was the progress that the question had really made. The Norfolk one might have been procured, as was stated, by Cobbett's shouting to a crowd of impoverished farmers and hungry labourers: 'Here's what will save your beds from being taken from under you; here's what will fill your bellies!' and by his calling fundholders 'bottle spiders,' and the clergy 'black slugs;' but no objections could be made to the character of the Yorkshire petition, signed by 17,000 educated and propertied men. The utmost pains had been taken, Lord Milton declared, to exclude the names of all who were not *bonâ-fide* freeholders; and he believed that there were not 50 names out of the 17,000 to which any exception could be reasonably made. No immediate conversion, however, appeared to be effected within the House; nor was there any gradual progress made to emulate that without. The annual debate was as languid as usual; and Lord J. Russell's motion, proposing 'serious consideration,' was negatived by a majority of 111 in a House of 449.

The discussion of the Catholic claims was this session enlivened by a fearful quarrel in the House, which appeared at the time injurious to the cause, but which was perhaps not so in reality, while it discloses to us now the difficulties of Mr. Canning's position, and the precariousness of political peace to him at home, while he was, in his function, the pacificator of the world. He had said, on some recent occasion, that he thought it impossible, in the existing state of parliament and the country, to form an administration which should agree upon this and other great questions, so as to be able to carry on the business of

the country. There was nothing in this declaration which would have attracted much attention from any one else; for all the world knew that the existing cabinet were cordially united on only one great subject—opposition to parliamentary reform. But Mr. Canning's words were caught up as meaning that he considered the cause of the Catholics hopeless. The main error lay in concluding him to suppose that the question could not be carried but by the whole of an administration being agreed in its favour; whereas he declared, in the course of the explanation: 'I did not mean it; nor do I think such an administration necessary.' Under this supposition, and amidst the uneasiness felt in sympathy with the expectant Catholics, who had hoped much from Mr. Canning's accession to office, and in fear lest their patience should not hold out, nothing was more likely than that Mr. Canning should be at once condemned as having deserted the cause, and sacrificed the Catholics to his own ambition.

On the night of the 17th of April, the Catholic question was debated, on occasion of a petition in favour of their claims being sent up from fifty-five clergymen in the diocese of Norwich. During the accidental and short absence of Mr. Canning, Sir F. Burdett made a fierce attack upon him for his supposed defection; to which the accused replied on his return. Mr. Tierney followed in a speech which charged Mr. Canning with the ruin of the hopes of the Catholics, and with all the possible consequences of that ruin, from his having taken office without making the concession of the Catholic claims an absolute condition. Mr. Grey Bennet declared, that 'he now thought the affair was a perfect trick; or what, in familiar language, was called a humbug.' All this was somewhat trying to the nerves of a man singularly sensitive, in health far from robust, and in a state of anxiety, no less for a cause he had much at heart than for his own political honour. But there was more to come. Mr. Brougham followed with one of those violent accusatory speeches, charged with insult, which had in those days a power that we now find it difficult to understand—so endurable as censure is usually rendered by extravagance in the expression. It was too much for Mr. Canning. He sat in con-

strained stillness, while hearing of his 'monstrous truckling,' 'political tergiversation,' etc., his cheek flushing, his nostril quivering, his eyes almost glaring, till he interrupted his adversary by slowly rising, with his eye fixed upon him, and saying, with forced calmness: 'I rise to say that that is false.' There was a dead silence in the House for some seconds; and even the Speaker seems to have been taken by surprise. It was he who broke the silence by saying, in a low tone, that he hoped the right honourable secretary would retract the expression he had used, as one not permissible by the laws and customs of the House. Mr. Canning refused to retract 'the sentiment;' and Mr. Brougham to explain away his imputation. The matter was got rid of by an unusual stretch of the usual explanation in such cases; that the charge referred to the political and not the private character of Mr. Canning. On the face of it, this was absurd and untrue; but to such shifts were the opponents of Mr. Canning more than once reduced during these few latter years of his life, when he stood almost alone in the legislature and the cabinet, while supported with a growing enthusiasm by the people. This quarrel, so far transcending the ordinary squabbles in parliament, yielded some good results. It fixed universal attention on Mr. Canning's view of the present state of the Catholic question—that it rested securely on its own merits; and that unity of opinion in the existing cabinet about it was not necessary to its settlement.

A step was taken this session with regard to the punishment of death, which was of importance, in as far as it tended to separate the idea of death punishment from crimes which were no longer capital. The practice of passing sentence of death when every one knew it would not be executed, had long been found very demoralising; and the practice was now superseded by one not more defensible, but less offensive and pernicious. In convictions of felony short of murder, discretion was afforded to the judge to reserve the case avowedly for a commutation of punishment, by recording, instead of pronouncing, the sentence of death ordained by the law; such record having the same effect 'as if such judgment had actually been

pronounced in open court, and the offender had been reprieved by the court.' Such an arrangement shows how little the great principle was understood, that certainty of punishment is of more consequence than the degree of it. When it is considered that most criminals are ignorant, it appears important above everything that the consequences of crime should be made as plain and intelligible, and as certain as possible. The levity of pronouncing a sentence which every one knew to be a mere form was now to be avoided; but it was by what appeared to the criminals whom it concerned a falsehood and a quibble. 'Do you know,' asked a prison-visitor of a young thief, 'what your sentence will be if you are found guilty?' 'Yes: death recorded.' 'And do you know what that means?' 'Yes: transportation.' It will be a marvel to a future generation that we are yet so far from letting our yea be yea, and our nay nay, in penal legislation, where stern truth and plain retribution ought to be our first care.

A remnant of barbarism was next got rid of by abolishing the old custom—for which there was no express warrant of law—of ignominious burial of persons *felo de se*. Up to this time, it had been the practice to bury such suicides in some public place; usually at the intersection of four roads, a stake being driven through the body. One consequence of this was, that a verdict of *felo de se* was very rarely returned; the coroner's jury offering a verdict of insanity, without or against evidence, in almost all cases of suicide. Since the passing of Mr. Lennard's bill, in this session, persons guilty of *felo de se* have been interred in burial-grounds, without funeral rites on the one hand, or barbarous usage on the other; within twenty-four hours of the return of the verdict, and between the hours of nine and twelve at night.

The subject of the marriage-law came up again; the act of the preceding year having been encumbered by so many troublesome forms as to impede marriage, instead of fostering it; which it was the intention of the bill to do. At the beginning of this session it was represented that marriages had remarkably decreased since the passage of the new act, and that loud complaints were made by the poorer classes of society, to whom it was most desirable to

make the forms of marriage easy. The obstructive clauses were immediately repealed; and a committee of the Lords was appointed to frame a permanent bill. An attempt was made by this committee to restore the voidability of marriage under certain circumstances; but the sense of parliament was against it; and the clause which would have rendered certain marriages of minors voidable within a certain period was thrown out by a majority of six.

Nothing is more memorable in the history of this year than the movement in the House and in the West Indies on the subject of negro slavery. Those who had achieved the abolition of the slave-trade had declared—and, no doubt, in all sincerity at the time—that their aim was confined to this object; but when men have entered upon a work of principle, be it what it may, they had better decline saying how far they will go. They can no more say beforehand where they will stop in the application of a principle than in the development of a science. New light is not calculable; and the future must be left to reveal itself. Thus did the truth now appear to the abolitionists. Their work was only begun; and they must not rest till they saw the end. At present, it is now clear they did not see the end; and they had much to learn about the means—much that we know only through their labours and sufferings, and which we must therefore apply to their case with reverence and gratitude. They did not yet see fully, that while there is slavery in the world, there will be a slave-trade; and that therefore the opposition should be made, in all parts of the world, not to the trade, but to the institution, through effectual denunciation of its principle. They did not then know that slaves can never be prepared by education for freedom; that freedom itself is the only possible education for a free man. They did not know that, in regard to the abolition of slavery, 'gradualism' is impossible. They did not see for long that gradual or prospective emancipation is indefensible in principle; and that, if it were not so, it would be impossible in practice. Those to whom they have bequeathed their good work see now—and *they* saw it before they died—that a man either can or cannot righteously be the property of man. If he can, then slavery is justified, and

there is nothing for abolitionists to do. If not, there can be no tampering with the wrong; no retention of stolen goods; no satisfaction in the promise of restitution at a distant day. Nor, as the stolen goods are men, is it possible to put off their release. If they know that they are entitled to freedom, on the ground of natural right, at any future time, they are entitled to it now. If their children are to be free as a matter of right, they themselves have the right to be free now. This logic, which lies deep down in the negro's heart, and is ever ready upon his tongue, cannot be controverted by legislative enactment, even though all the highest wits of the world went to make the parliament. All this appears plain enough to us now; but there is nothing in our modern history more interesting than the evolution of the proof. It seems like going back to the early tentative stage of an established moral question, to read the debates of this session of 1823 on West Indian affairs.

Mr. Thomas Fowell Buxton moved, as a resolution, on the 15th of May: 'That the state of slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British constitution, and of the Christian religion, and that it ought to be abolished gradually throughout the British colonies, with as much expedition as may be found consistent with a due regard to the wellbeing of the parties concerned.' The enactments which he hoped would follow upon the adoption of this resolution, were such as would ordain the freedom of all children born after a certain day, and mitigate the condition of such slaves as were never to be freed. Mr. Canning seized at once upon the weak point—the 'gradualism.' He contended that if slavery was repugnant to the principles of the British constitution and of the gospel, no terms ought to be held with it. It should be met by no proposal of gradual abolition, but by a demand for its immediate extinction. He declared, however, that while the spirit of English society and government was not that which could fraternise with slavery, it was certain that the legislature—the maker and regulator of the British constitution—had sanctioned slavery in the colonies during preceding centuries. As for the rest of his speech, it amounted to much the same as those of everybody out of

the band of associated abolitionists. He did not go quite so far as Mr. Baring, who, in the same breath, declared himself as sincere an abolitionist as any man, and deprecated all mention of the subject of slavery in that House, rebellion and bloodshed being sure to follow. He did not, like Mr. Baring and some others, regard the welfare of West India property as the only important consideration in the case. He did remember, as too many did not, that the negroes were a party in the case, and that their fate was an element in the question. But he was not prepared to assert any principle, or to contemplate any course of action, which should bring the abolition of the institution into question practically, within any assignable time. He proposed resolutions declaratory of the expediency of immediately ameliorating the condition of the British slave population; of the hope that such amelioration might fit the slaves for freedom; and of the desire of the House that these objects should be accomplished, at the earliest period that the safety of all parties would allow.

This was as much as the most sanguine of the abolitionists had expected to obtain; and it was more than their adversaries were able to bear. After a long debate, Mr. Canning's resolutions were carried without a division; and it was ordered that they should be laid before the king by certain members of the privy-council. Then arose a prodigious clamour in the country, on the part of the West India interest. The government was declared to have gone over to ultra-abolitionism; and West India property fell in the market. As for the colonies, when the news of the debate arrived, there was much anger; but there was at first little fear. Mr. Canning's resolutions were looked upon as mere declarations—mere words; and abolition 'in the abstract' is as little formidable to a slaveholder as slavery in the abstract is disturbing to the heart of an abolitionist like Mr. Baring, whose action in the matter consisted in recommending universal silence on the subject. It soon appeared, however, that the resolutions, and the House that had passed them, really meant something. A circular, dated from Downing Street, on the 24th of May, reached the functionaries of the different islands; and in this circular they read the doom of slavery. It did

not convey anything which appears to us very tremendous. It drew the attention of its recipients to the debate in the House, and gave a decisive intimation that there must be an end of the flogging of women, and of the use of the whip in the field. It was not the nature of these particulars which affected so deeply the West Indian mind. It was the fact of the interference at all; the prospect of further interference; the dread of emancipation at last; and before all these, there was the besetting vision—the panic which comes upon the slaveholder with every breath from over the seas—his cold horror at noon—his nightmare in the dark—the apprehension of insurrection, if any one of a million of negroes should hear that the British government was thinking about them. To other people it appears that the very time when the negroes are least disposed to rebel is that when they know that their cause is in good hands; and that nothing is so likely to drive them to insurrection as the feeling that they have none to help them. In another country, and at a later time, this has proved eminently true. Before 1832, there were numerous revolts among the negroes in the slave-states of North America; the average number being twelve in a year. Since Garrison rose up to be the Moses to this multitude of bondmen, there have been no insurrections at all. The slaves are aware that their cause is in better hands than their own; and they wait, in trust and hope.

The House of Assembly in Jamaica was passionate, according to its wont; talked of proclaiming the independence of the islands, if parliament should attempt to dictate to them; talked of addressing the king to remove Lord Bathurst (the signer of the circular) from his majesty's councils; talked of repealing the Registry Act; but did none of these things. What they did was to appoint a committee to consider what steps should be taken in consequence of the receipt of the circular; and they finally voted that they would take their own way of being just and kind to their slaves; and would not attend to any dictation from the mother-country. They also voted an address to their governor, in which they declared against making any alterations in their slave-code.

In Barbadoes there was a rising; but it was of the slaveholding party. In slaveholding countries, the poorest order of freemen are, as everybody knows, a peculiarly depraved class, for reasons obvious enough. Where there are slaves to do the work of a society, industry is opprobrious, and idleness is honour. Such freemen as are too poor to have slaves, and to avoid work, are in a disgraced position; and none but the degraded would hold that position. A missionary at Barbadoes named Shrewsbury, was believed to have written home to those who sent him that the lowest class of white men in that colony were ignorant and depraved. It is probable that he did so write; and that what he wrote was true. A multitude assembled round his chapel while he was in the pulpit, and silenced him with the noise of cat-calls and other clamour. The preacher stood in his place till he could be heard, and then went on with the service. The rioters next put out placards, inviting the missionary's enemies to assemble at the chapel on the following evening. They did so, and levelled the building with the ground. A placard put forth by the governor, Sir Henry Warde, offering a reward for the apprehension of any of the persons engaged, was answered by one issued by the rioters, threatening vengeance on any one who should give information, and warning all missionaries not to set foot in Barbadoes—a place which did indeed seem as alien as it thus declared itself from the religion of Christ. Mr. Shrewsbury was obliged to fly for his life. Such proceedings could not end at the point they had reached; and now ensued an excited state of suspense as to what was to happen next.

And so it was in another colony, Demerara, whose name and fame were deeply disgraced this year. When the circular reached the colony, the members of the government and other gentlemen talked of it in the presence of their domestic slaves, without making any express communications to the negroes on the subject of it, and even endeavouring to keep it secret from the field-hands. When the Court of Policy passed regulations in accordance with the instructions of the circular, pains were still taken to conceal the whole affair from the negroes. From what they heard from the house-slaves, they naturally supposed that

orders for their emancipation had arrived from England, and that they were to be defrauded of it. In most slave regions, this would have led to a massacre of the whites; and it no doubt would here, but for the influence of a missionary of the Independents, to whom the Episcopalian clergyman of the colony ascribes the whole merit of the fact that not a drop of the blood of white men was shed. This missionary, John Smith, had been in the colony for seven years, during which time he had trained his flock to habits of order, industry, submission, and peace. Under his care, marriage became almost universal; and not one marriage in fifty was violated. There was an extraordinary deficiency of religious ministers in this colony; and that one man could have effected what Mr. Smith did, shows what may be done by the calm and steady zeal of one man, whose single object is the improvement and happiness of his neighbours. Just before the changes caused by the circular, the governor, whose object was to 'make head against the sectaries,' among whom he included all the religious bodies in the colony except the one Episcopalian flock—even the Dutch and Scotch churches, as well as the Methodist and Independent missionaries—had issued a prohibition to all the negroes to attend public worship, except by means of a pass from their owners; these owners being under no obligation to grant such a pass. When the slaves found themselves thus hindered in their worship, and believed themselves debarred from the liberty which the king had granted them, they rose upon their masters. They shed no blood; but they imprisoned the whites and put some in the stocks. The first who rose were some upon the east coast, who had suffered most by the deprivation of liberty to attend church, and they were joined by others who thought more of the other cause of complaint. The rising took place on the 18th of August. On the 19th, martial law was proclaimed. On the 20th, the insurrection was completely over. While no white was sacrificed, above two hundred negroes were killed and wounded in the first instance; forty-seven were executed; and the floggings of many more were worse than death—a thousand lashes being a frequent sentence. So much for the insurrection. It was Mr. Smith's story, in

connection with it, which makes this particular revolt conspicuous above others in the history of our time.

The governor kept the colony under martial law for five months after this insurrection of two days; and one of the persons brought to trial under this martial law was the missionary, Mr. Smith. Now was the time, during the reign of martial law, for 'making head against the sectaries.' The one Episcopalian clergyman, however, gave the governor no help in the valiant work. His testimony is all in favour of the 'sectary' under persecution. He declared his conviction, that 'nothing but those religious impressions which, under Providence, Mr. Smith has been instrumental in fixing—nothing but those principles of the gospel of peace which he has been proclaiming—could have prevented a dreadful effusion of blood here, and saved the lives of those very persons who are now, I shudder to write it, seeking his.' Under this reign of martial law, the pastor was kept in prison for two months before trial; in apartments—the one under the roof, exposed to burning heat—and the other on the ground, fetid from the stagnant water visible under the boards of the floor. He was an invalid before his arrest; and his death under these circumstances is not to be wondered at. The mode and conduct of the trial abounded in illegalities; and his conviction took place, on the evidence of three negroes, who afterwards confessed that they had been wrought upon to allege what was wholly false. The charges were, of having incited the slaves to revolt; of having concealed their intention to rise; and of having refused—which he did on the ground of ill health, and of his clerical office—to serve in the militia, several days after the suppression of the rebellion. But the real purpose of the trial is obvious, through all the ill-supported pretences put forward in the military court which assembled in the name of justice. 'No man,' declared Mr. Brougham in parliament, 'can cast his eye upon this trial without perceiving that it was intended to bring on an issue between the system of the slave-law and the instruction of the negroes.' This was, in truth, the cause in question; and John Smith was its martyr. The life of martyrs in a cause so vital and so comprehensive as this is rarely or never given in vain;

and few have been laid down to more effectual purpose than that of the Demerara missionary.

He was sentenced to death; but his persecutors had not the courage to subject themselves to the consequences of executing a judgment so obtained. They transmitted the sentence to England, for the decision of the British government. The British government rescinded the sentence of the court-martial, as far as related to the penalty of death, but decreed Mr. Smith's banishment from the colony. No time was lost in transmitting the information to Demerara; but before it arrived, the missionary was in his grave. His medical attendants had repeatedly declared that if he had not a better apartment, he must sink; but he was not removed; nor was he allowed a change of linen; nor the attendance of a friend to relieve the cares of his worn and wearied wife. He died on the 6th of February, 1824. The funeral was ordered to take place at two o'clock in the morning, that no negro tears might be shed over the pastor's coffin. The widow and her friend, Mrs. Elliot, intended to follow the coffin; but the head-constable declared that this could not be permitted. 'Is it possible,' cried Mrs. Elliot, "that General Murray can wish to prevent a poor widow from following her husband to the grave?' The widow exclaimed that General Murray should not prevent it; that she would go, happen what might. The head-constable went to his excellency to report this, and brought back orders to imprison the women, if they attempted to follow the coffin. The mourners, therefore, went first. They left the jail, attended by a negro with a lantern, and arrived at the grave before the coffin was brought; the light weight carried by two negroes with a single lantern, and attended only by the clergyman, Mr. Austin, whose testimony in favour of his Christian brother we have quoted above. Two negro members of Mr. Smith's congregation, a carpenter and bricklayer, wished to mark the spot of their pastor's rest. They began to rail in and cover over the grave; but by official orders the brickwork was broken up, the rails torn down, and the spot left desolate.

Mr. Smith died on the 6th of February. On the 24th of the same month, a public meeting of Demerara slave-

owners resolved forthwith to petition the Court of Policy 'to expel all missionaries from the colony, and to pass a law prohibiting their admission for the future.' The government paper of the same month declares: 'It is most unfortunate for the cause of the planters, that they did not speak out in time. They did not say, as they ought to have said, to the first advocates of missions and education, we shall not tolerate your plans till you prove to us that they are safe and necessary; we shall not suffer you to enlighten our slaves, who are by law our property, till you can demonstrate that when they are made religious and knowing, they will still continue to be our slaves.' Again: 'To address a promiscuous audience of black or coloured people, bond and free, by the endearing appellation of "My brethren and sisters," is what can nowhere be heard except in Providence Chapel.' These are evidences quite as strong as any connected with the trial, that the Christian religion was wholly inappropriate to Demerara society. These are evidences, as strong as any afforded by the trial, that 'it was intended to bring on an issue between the system of the slave-law and the instruction of the negroes;' and to one who clearly saw this, the cause would appear one worth dying for. But to martyrs themselves, the scope of their case is seldom clear; and in this instance, the probability of such an animating comprehension was less than ordinary. This John Smith, perhaps, prepared himself, during his missionary training, for violence from half-naked savages—for mockery in an unknown tongue—for the fire, the flint-knife, the tomahawk, and every possible destitution of comfort and of intercourse; but he could hardly have anticipated persecution and heartbreak from Christian gentlemen, and officials under the British government. If he saw clearly the scope of his own case—saw that he was not the less a martyr for his judges being British officers, the curses on him uttered by Christian tongues, and his bolts turned by Christian hands, he might sustain his spirit amidst the reeking vapours of his dungeon, and the damps of death. In court, he had been silenced; but his voice was soon to be heard in the British parliament, and by the firesides in Orkney and Scilly, and under the cane-roofs in India, and among

the pine barrens of Canada. His private journal had been taken from his locked desk, to be pored over by malignant eyes; but he need not, therefore, wish that he had never written it. Once brought to light, the very light seemed to catch it up, and to present it, sun-printed, before all eyes that were vigilant for human liberties. He might have appeared to himself sunk in desolation, and squalor, and ignominious misfortune, when arrested, tried, and sentenced as a criminal under the semblance of the forms of British law and Christian authority; and he might not have felt that exhilaration of martyrdom which would have thrilled through him in a scene outwardly more savage. But not the less was he a martyr; and the cause was not the less express or worthy, because the heathens with whom he had to do bore the Christian name. The true issue will never be forgotten—'the issue between the system of the slave-law and the instruction of the negroes.' It was understood in England as by a universal intuition; by the whole nation—from the king, in his sumptuous seclusion, going over the matter with the premier, to the little child on its mother's knee, hearing its father tell on the cottage bench of the missionary's negro flock, his unfair trial, and his dreary lantern-burial. It needed only to be brought fairly before British minds, and near to British hearts, that slaves were anywhere denied to be their brethren and sisters—were anywhere deliberately denied their birthright of knowledge and religious fellowship—to secure the overthrow of slavery.

From this time the doom of slavery was fixed, and known to be so; and the impotent struggles of resistance in the colonies served no other purpose so effectually as that of reminding men of Smith the missionary, and stimulating them to new efforts in the cause for which he died.

The session of parliament closed on the 19th of July, the royal speech being delivered by commission, owing to the indisposition of the king. The noticeable point of the speech is its tone of congratulation on the abatement of agricultural distress, and on the high prosperity of commerce and manufactures.

CHAPTER VII.

Prosperity—Repeal of the Spitalfields Acts—Artisan Restriction Laws—Free Trade—Silk Duties—Wool Duty—Reduction of Duties and Bounties—Uniformity of Weights and Measures—Close of Session.

THE year 1824 opened amidst such prosperity, that instead of grumbling there was nothing heard of among capitalists of every order but anticipations of vast increase of wealth. The demand for all kinds of agricultural produce was steadily rising; and wheat was at 62*s.* on the average for the year. The price of bread was not complained of; for almost every class of labourers was well employed. The cotton manufacture increased largely; the iron-masters were in high spirits; the hardware trade was brisk; and the woollen manufacturers made no complaint. In the exhilaration of the time, men were disposed to make haste to be rich; and the immense spread of joint-stock companies became a joke of the time—a heavy joke enough in its issue, but very merry at the moment. While this exhilaration and satisfaction were apparent on the surface of society, and there was even in its depths a sense of comfort and hope not often enjoyed there, some things were going forward in by-places, which make us wonder now how men could have been satisfied with a state of things so obviously needing improvement in its principle and in many of its workings.

There were strange doings by night in the creeks and hollow-ways and caves of the southern coast; and a remarkable order of passengers by day in the packets from France. Every now and then a fisherman's great boots were found to be stuffed with French lace, gloves, or jewellery; or a lady's petticoats to be quilted all through with silk stockings and lace. Here and there, a nice-looking loaf of bread was found to have a curious kernel of lace and gloves; and a roll of sailcloth turned out to be a

package of gay lute-string. In the dead of the night a large body of men would work for hours noiselessly in the soft sands, rolling tubs of spirits, and carrying bales of goods in the shadows of the rocks, and through tunnels, and up chasms, under the very feet of the preventive patrol, and within sound of the talk of the sentries. While this was going forward on the English coast, the smugglers on the opposite shore were engaged, with much more labour, risk, and expense, in introducing English woollens, by a vast system of fraud and lying, into the towns, past a series of custom-houses. In both countries there was an utter dissoluteness of morals connected with these transactions. Cheating and lying were essential to the whole system; drunkenness accompanied it; contempt for all law grew up under it; honest industry perished beneath it; and it was crowned with murder. Little children who lived near a smuggling haunt learned early to be sly, and to say anything that was convenient. Their mothers stole down to the sands at night to bring up light goods which they might hide in the rafters of the cottage, and spread temptingly before any foolish ladies within their reach. Or, if they did not themselves meddle, they reproached their husbands for working at the plough or the anvil when certain neighbours could make a pocketful of money in a night. As for the men, they were tapping a cask of spirits when their work was done at dawn, and passing the daylight hours in a drunken sleep, in some hidden place, instead of being at honest labour in the field or in the shop. Then, if the expected boat did not come in, they would not meet for nothing, but go poaching in the nearest preserves. When detected, which was sure to happen pretty often, a conflict ensued; and the newspapers of the time abound in notices of preventive men and smugglers shot.

As for the loss and financial injury to the nations from this state of things, it was estimated at a later period (1831), when smuggling had much declined, that the amount of duties evaded by the smuggling of French goods alone, and exclusive of the great article of tobacco, exceeded £800,000 a year; while the value of British goods smuggled into France by the Belgian frontier alone

exceeded £2,000,000. All this demoralising trade was taken out of the very substance of the honest trade which would have been carried on for the general good, if our commercial system had been a wise one." And there was, besides, an enormous annual outlay for the sake of obviating this undermining of the revenue. The preventive service and the coast blockade were the expensive apparatus employed for this end; and fifty-two revenue cruisers were always hovering about the coasts. The coast blockade consisted of 1500 officers and seamen of the navy; and there was the coast-guard besides, with their cottages and establishments. In 1822 and 1823 the number of captures was 52 vessels and 385 boats engaged in smuggling. The cost at that time amounted to between four and five hundred thousand pounds a year. When to this is added the expense of the dwellings of the coast-guard and all other items, the total annual cost of protecting the revenue may be estimated at not much below a million. This cost is independent of the loss to the revenue from the evasion of the legal duties and of the injury to lawful commerce by the intervention of the smuggler. Amidst the general prosperity there was something wrong here.

Elsewhere there was trouble of another kind. Exactly at the time when work was pressing most to be done, it was made impossible to get it done by the refusal of the workmen. The higher the prosperity the higher ran the discontents between masters and men, and among the different ranks of workmen themselves. The strikes at this time were of a particularly formidable character; and so were the mutual violences of the work-people. At Macclesfield, there was a serious conflict between the soldiers and four hundred rioters, part of a body of six thousand who had risen against their employers on a question of time and wages. Near Glasgow, a mob of weavers assaulted and persecuted a family of their own craft for working for an obnoxious master; and in many places there were alarms and disorders—hanging people in effigy, throwing vitriol, and even, it is believed, the commission of murder; while the bulk of the workmen in every craft were under an insufferable tyranny from the

domination of their leaders, and the employers were harassed with vain attempts to execute orders which would have enriched them and their men together. Here a public edifice was left unfinished till the best weather for building was past; there, in the dyer's office, where the perfection of the black dye depended on a speedy use of a favourable state of the atmosphere, the goods were left in the vats exposed to the air for days, till they were spoiled. Elsewhere, the weaver who was willing to work for a twelfth hour in a busy time for increased wages, was met in the dark, and told that he would be murdered if he worked for more than eleven hours; and another found his clothes burned to rags with vitriol, for not having refused to work for an unpopular master; and some disappeared altogether—departed or murdered. There was something wrong here—that such troubles should exist amidst the general prosperity.

The new men ushered in by a new time took these mischiefs in hand. To consider the last-mentioned evils first—great changes were made this year in the laws respecting wages.

The Spitalfields journeymen were now well employed, and they were as careless about the passage of the bill proposed the preceding year as they had then been alarmed. It was not that they had grown wiser; for they did not yet perceive that a fixed legal rate of wages must have the effect of stopping the manufacture in unfavourable seasons, and of precluding their employers from competing with those of Macclesfield and Paisley, and other places where labour and its rewards were left free. They did not perceive how much of their business had been driven out of Middlesex by their Middlesex privileges; but the eleven thousand who had earnestly petitioned against change the year before, now let change take its course. They were fully employed during this season of prosperity, and supposed it would be always so; so they said nothing against the repeal of the Spitalfields Act, which took place very quietly this session. Lord Lauderdale introduced the matter in the Upper House where the change met with some opposition. In the Lower, no discussion took place at all. But for this proceeding,

there can be no doubt that the silk manufacture in Spitalfields would have been extinct before this time.

A committee of the House, with Mr. Hume for its chairman, reported upon the laws relating to artisans and machinery. Three points had been especially considered by this committee; the state of the combination laws; the question of permitting or prohibiting the emigration of artisans; and that of permitting or prohibiting the exportation of machinery. Of these three points, the last was left to stand over for future consideration. The report declared, with regard to the second point, that no laws could effectually prevent the emigration of artisans; that it was inexpedient to irritate the feelings of a valuable order of men by denying them the liberty of travelling which everybody else enjoyed, and interfering to prevent their carrying their labour to the best market; and that there was reason to believe that many valuable artisans who wished to return home remained abroad from a supposition that they were liable to punishment on their return. The total repeal of all laws affecting the freedom of travelling of artisans was therefore recommended. The recommendation was acted upon, and no opposition was made to this emancipation.

The third point was a very serious one; the consideration of the combination laws. The committee reported their conclusions—that these laws were instruments of oppression in the hands of employers, who had the means of putting them in force against their men, while no case was known to the committee of an employer being punished under them, even in the most flagrant cases of conspiracy against the interests of artisans. The report recommended that employers and their men should be left free, by a repeal of these laws, to manage their interests in their own way; and that that portion of the common law should be altered which treated as a conspiracy a peaceable meeting of masters and men. In the next session, Mr. Huskisson explained that some mistakes had been made in the proceedings which followed upon this report; that the bill founded upon the report had been framed and passed too hastily, and without due legal supervision. The bill repealed thirty or forty acts of parliament, and took away

all the security given by the common law against the oppression and violence which might ensue upon combinations to regulate labour and wages. The repeal was, indeed, too sweeping and unguarded. The act was no sooner passed than monstrous combinations arose, under which industry was paralysed, and dangerous discontents threatened the peace of society. From August to January, scarcely a stroke of work was done in Glasgow and the neighbourhood. The turbulent compelled the timid to strike when they would fain have gone on to work in peace; and an organisation was formed under which masters and men suffered for long years afterwards—the masters most in prosperous times, and the men in adverse seasons; but both parties always from mutual jealousy and a constant sense of insecurity. It is true that experience must teach in time, and that men must learn better from experience than from law, the injury on all hands when employers coerce the labour of the employed, and when artisans refuse to labour for capitalists, and stand idly aloof from the means of bread. It is true that experience appears to have taught the parties concerned something of this; for strikes are not now anything like what they were at the period of which we write. But at that time something must be done to control the existing licence. Early in the session of 1825, Mr. Huskisson moved for a committee to reconsider the action of parliament on the subject; and the result was that the act of 1824 was repealed, and another substituted for it, which is the existing law. By this act, combinations of masters and workmen to settle terms about wages and hours of labour are made legal; but combinations for controlling employers by moral violence were again put under the operation of the common law. By this as much was done for the freedom and security of both parties as can be done by legislation, which, in this matter, as in all others, is an inferior safeguard to that of personal intelligence.

Important as was this era to the working-classes on account of its legislation on wages, it was yet more so as introducing freedom of trade, promotive of manufacture. The cotton manufacture had been allowed a fair chance from the beginning by freedom from those restrictions

with which the silk and woollen trades had been fettered. In the history of the nation, the year 1824 will ever be memorable, for the sake of the benefits secured to the manufacturing classes by the new man of the new time.

These manufacturing classes were at this period holding a higher position in the nation than they had ever done before. The increase of numbers was not equally divided between the agricultural population and that engaged in manufactures and commerce. The increase of agricultural families was only two and a half per cent. of the whole, in the twenty years from 1811 to 1831, while that of manufacturing and trading families was nearly thirty-one and a half per cent. The disproportion had now begun which was to go on increasing up to the present day, and which must, as most persons agree, continue to increase till agriculture has so far improved, in science and art, as to create a demand for labour like that arising from freedom and consequent improvement in manufactures. In our own time, we seldom see the children of artisan families destined to agricultural industry; while we as seldom see all the children of parents engaged in agriculture employed upon the soil. The farmer places out some of his sons in business, while his daughters marry tradesmen; and the field-labourer is glad to get his children out to service in the towns, or to employment in factories. The agricultural portion of society has, for many years, been diminishing, while the other departments of occupation have been increasing in a constantly augmenting proportion. The freedom of the cotton trade, in contrast with the restrictions on agriculture which went under the name of protection, were, no doubt, a chief cause of the shifting of the balance of preponderance prior to this time; and now the silk and woollen manufactures were to be allowed to prosper, after the same method as the cotton.

In the year 1685, the intolerant King of France, Louis XIV., drove many thousands of his best subjects out of his kingdom, by persecution for their religious faith. It is believed that not less than 50,000 came to England; and of these many were skilled in silk-weaving. These Frenchmen were the original Spitalfields weavers. When they arrived, there was a free-trade in silks with all countries

where they were produced; but the immigrants obtained laws in their own favour, before the century was out, which shut out all foreign silks whatever. In 1719, the brothers Lombe set up a silk-mill—having learned, at great risk and expense, how the Italian silk-mills were constructed. The money they expended was under the security of the heavy duties which were laid upon the thrown silk imported from Italy; and when they had been repaid and rewarded by parliament, the expense of the establishment of silk-mills in England was the reason always brought forward for continuing the heavy duties on foreign thrown silk, when any one proposed to get it cheaper from Italy. This was very hurtful to the manufacture in England, both as regarded its extension and the improvement of its quality. It advanced very slowly—much more slowly than was natural—till the introduction of cotton fabrics into general wear, towards the end of the century, threw it back for some years. In 1793, four thousand looms stood idle which had given employment to ten thousand persons seven years before. When the manufacture revived, it was in consequence of the vast increase in the production of silk in India, where the Company had introduced the Italian method of preparing the material. The price per pound was not much lower than that of Italian silk, exclusive of duty; but in Italy only one crop of raw silk was produced in a year, while in India there were two or three. This abundance tended to remove those restrictions on manufacture which arise from scarcity of the raw material. Before 1770, only 100,000 pounds of silk were imported, whereas in 1823 the quantity amounted to 1,200,000 pounds of a much better quality. At that time, the value of the silk manufacture was estimated at ten millions; and it was believed to support about 400,000 persons. Yet our silks were higher priced than those of France, and generally considered not so good. It was the fashion among the ladies to prefer French silks; and so great was the encouragement given to smuggling through this fancy, that the English manufacturers found it answer well to send their fabrics to sea, to have them landed as smuggled goods; and the ladies were perfectly happy, as long as they knew nothing of the device, and could admire

and show their dresses as Lyon manufacture—so far superior to anything that could be produced at home! If the French silks were then really superior to the English, while cheaper, the time was coming when they would be neither better nor cheaper; for the day was at hand when that freedom of competition was to be allowed, which is the true stimulus to improvement, and when the reduction of duties on various articles used in the silk manufacture would permit a lowering of the price of the fabric. As soon as Mr. Robinson and Mr. Huskisson came into office, the principal silk manufacturers in and around London presented a petition in favour of the removal of restrictions on the manufacture, which enabled Mr. Huskisson to plead that 'the trade had been the first to suggest the removal of these restrictions; and he was confident they would be nearly the first to rejoice at their removal.' The petitioners declare that 'this important manufacture, though recently considerably extended, is still depressed below its natural level by laws which prevent it from attaining that degree of prosperity which under more favourable circumstances it would acquire. Taking into account the unlimited supply of silk with which we might be furnished from our East India possessions, our indefinite command of capital, and the unrivalled skill and industry of our artisans, your petitioners hesitate not to express their conviction that, by judicious arrangements, our silk manufacture might be placed in a condition ultimately to triumph over all foreign competition, and that silk, like cotton, may be made one of the staple commodities of the country.' While some few of the multitude engaged in the silk manufacture were wise enough to wish for freedom in both directions, the greater number were urgent for the repeal of duties on the materials employed, but clamorous against the importation of manufactured silks, and against any great reduction of the duties on the organzine, or prepared silk. It was no easy matter for the minister to determine his course among the various parties. The proprietors of silk-mills remonstrated against the admission of foreign organzine; and Mr. Buxton presented 'a petition from 23,000 journeymen silk-weavers of the metropolis, praying that the prohibition of the importation of foreign wrought silks might not

be removed.' The members of the House could with difficulty make their way in through the crowds of pale-faced operatives, who filled all the passages, and who watched every countenance with the wistfulness of men who are trying to read their fate. In the House, the galleries were filled with manufacturers, who occasionally burst into loud exclamations of joy or dismay, as the minister gratified or disappointed them. At the conclusion of Mr. Huskisson's speech, however, they echoed the cheers of the House by a loud clapping; a token of satisfaction which was thought to be occasioned by the least wise part of the proposed measures—that which extended the existing duty on wrought silks over the next two years and a quarter.

The duties on raw silk were immediately reduced to 3*d.* per pound from 5*s.* 7½*d.* on all that did not come from Bengal, and 4*s.* on all that did. The risk was thought too great of making a corresponding reduction of the duties on thrown silk; and they were therefore reduced less than one-half—from 14*s.* 8*d.* to 7*s.* 6*d.* per pound. The prohibition against the importation of foreign silks was to continue up to July 1826, when they were to be admitted at an *ad valorem* duty of thirty per cent. By this latter provision it was expected that time would be given for preparation for the change, and for smoothing the transition. But it was found so injurious in its working, by the uncertainty, slackness of sales, and derangement of demand that it caused, that the minister avowed this to be the one great error of his scheme, and men of business learned from the case of the silk manufacturers now, that far less mischief is done by a prompt than a lingering change, when alterations in commercial policy have to be made. Mr. Huskisson was so far free from the responsibility of the injurious delay, that he declared 'in his own opinion, the time which had been granted was not at all called for, but he had ceded it in deference to the feelings of the parties interested, and with a view to conciliate, as much as possible, those who thought their interests might suffer by the measure.' It is amusing now to see one reason alleged for the delay of the change. 'We hope we shall have time to get out of the trade before the storm arrives.' As for

the poor weavers, who could not 'get out of the trade, their tone was very humble. They 'thanked the House and the chancellor of the exchequer for the postponement of the day of their destruction till 1826,' and prayed that it might be further postponed till 1829. The bill passed the Commons on the 25th of March, and the Lords on the 21st of May.

And what happened, when this day of destruction arrived? The poor weavers who had been, from their first aggregation as a body, subject to periodical famine, when the hand of charity was regularly invoked, to lead them back from death's door—how was it with them now, when they were awaiting a worse crisis than any they had known? What a blessed relief it must have been to these thousands who had been kept in a state of nervous apprehension for above two years, to find their manufacture growing brisker from month to month, and their children better fed and clothed after the year 1826 than they had been for a long time before! In the year 1826 itself there was depression; but it was in consequence of the crash of the banks at that time, as is proved by the steady advance which took place in 1827, and continued till, in 1829, it was found that the silk manufacture was then twice as extensive as in 1821, 1822, and 1823, and still progressive. Our machinery and our taste improved, and with them the fabric and patterns and colours of our manufactured silks, till it was clear to unprejudiced eyes that the English silks had become superior to the French. In ten years from the passing of the bill, and in eight years from the admission of French silks, we were exporting silk goods to France, to the value of £60,346 in the year. New mills were erected, and the manufacture spread gradually from district to district, calling more and more thousands into employment. A voice of distress was still heard from Coventry, while London, Manchester, and Paisley were relieved and satisfied. This was because the Coventry people liked their own old ways better than new ones. They would not hear of power-looms, except from those who complained of power-looms, and proposed to put them down. The member for Coventry, Mr. Ellice, pleaded their cause in the House on the 23rd of February 1826, in his compassion for their

inability to compete with the Swiss and French ribbon-weavers, when the fabrics of the latter should be introduced in July of the same year. He said: 'The superiority of the French and Swiss looms has been ascertained beyond all doubt. . . . Much has been done within the last two years in introducing improvements; and time and encouragement are alone wanting to give confidence for further application of capital to this most important object. One workman can produce, with the improved engine-loom lately adopted, six times the quantity of ribbon he could have before manufactured in his common single-hand loom; and it is a melancholy consideration, and one eminently deserving the serious attention of the House and his majesty's government, that fully three-fourths of the looms still in use in Coventry, to which place this manufacture is almost entirely confined, are of an inefficient description, and by far the greater part of them, the property, and it is sadly to be feared the only property, of the operative weavers themselves.'

These last considerations are very sad; and so they were felt to be by the House; but when it was proposed to decree protection to the Coventry weavers on these grounds, the House decided against it by a vote of 222 to 40 against the appointment of a committee to consider of it. It was clear that, instead of countenancing a preservation of the antiquated and bad methods of weaving ribbons by special protection, every facility should be afforded for improving the manufacture by competition with the most able foreigners. As it was clearly impossible to bring back the Swiss and French workmen to the use of expensive methods, and to prevent their command of the markets by their superiority, the only thing to be done was to emulate that superiority, so as to meet them fairly in the markets of the world. This method has completely answered in the case of all the other kinds of silk manufacture; and if the Coventry operatives continued to suffer after those of Macclesfield and Manchester had begun their new career of prosperity, it was not from the removal of protection, under which they had sunk to their impoverished state, but to their own deficiency of knowledge and skill. There was nothing in their isolated case

to shake the confidence of the minister when he said: 'Whether in a public station or in retirement, my greatest happiness will be to feel assured that the power and resources of this country have been increased by those measures of commercial policy which it has fallen to my lot to submit to parliament. That such will be their ultimate result is my firm and conscientious conviction.' Within three years of the utterance of these words, it was proved that the power and resources of the country had been increased by the doubling of the silk manufacture, and all the collateral advantages pertaining to such an increase. It was against this benefactor of his country, and all who acted upon his views, that a member of the House, on that same night, quoted, in his horror of 'theory,' the saying of Mr. Burke, that 'a perfect metaphysician, unbending and hard-hearted, exceeded the devil in point of malignity, and contempt for the welfare of mankind.' This is a striking lesson on the operation of prejudice; a subject on which there are few men who have not something to learn.

The case of the woollen manufacture, which received a similar boon this year, was somewhat different from that of silk. No duty was ever laid on wool till 1803; and then it amounted to little more than ½*d.* per lb. The duty never exceeded 1*d.* per lb. till 1819, when Mr. Vansittart most imprudently increased it to 6*d.* per lb. The trade had not been prosperous for some time before; and this increase of duty aggravated the mischief suddenly and greatly. The decline in the export of woollens in the very first year after the imposition of the duty was not less than one-fourth. It was to retrace the steps taken, to repair, if possible, the mischief done, that Mr. Huskisson now, after five years' trial of the augmented duty, reverted to the former plan. Foreign wool imported for English consumption, of the value of 1*s.* per lb. and upwards, was to pay a duty of 1*d.* per lb.; and wool of an inferior quality was to pay ½*d.* per lb. The novelty of the scheme was that English wool-growers were now permitted to export wool, on payment of a duty of 1*d.* per lb.

Before this time, the state of the case was this. The agriculturists would have liked that the manufacturers

should be allowed to have no wool but theirs; and what they desired was a high duty on the wool that was brought in, while they themselves should be allowed to export wool freely—selling it abroad or at home, wherever they could get the best price for it. This, of course, was not considered a reasonable demand. The manufacturers, on their part, wished that the exportation of British wool should be prohibited while they begged for a free importation. In behalf of this free importation they alleged, and with truth, that British wool is of only limited use by itself. It is good for making carpets, baizes, flannels, blankets, and other coarse fabrics; but it will not make fine broadcloth, unless mixed with foreign wool. This was an excellent argument for the free introduction of foreign wool; but there was nothing to be said for the desired restriction on the British wool-grower. When Mr. Huskisson proposed to relieve both classes by permitting wool to come in and go out on payment of a duty of 1*d.* per l. each way, he was assailed with complaints and abuse from both parties, who were more alarmed by the benefit offered to their adversaries—as they called each other—than pleased at the advantage given to themselves. The minister had further to sustain the abuse of the large number of persons who, in their horror of 'theory' and 'abstract notions,' forgot that he was reverting to a rate of duty which had existed only five years before. However, he knew what he was about. He knew that the unimpeded importation of foreign wool is absolutely necessary to the very existence of the most important part of the manufacture in England, which cannot proceed without it. He knew that the importation would sustain the price of British wools by enabling some kinds to be profitably worked up, which could not be otherwise used to advantage. He was well aware that much ground had been lost in foreign markets by the injurious policy of the preceding five years, by which the price of wool had been raised at home and lowered abroad, thus giving to continental manufacturers a great advantage in the markets. But he felt it to be his duty to try whether the lost ground could be regained; and he went forward with his project through all the clamour.

It was, indeed, full late to set about retracing our steps. The foreigners were before us everywhere. As for the home demand, cottons were now largely superseding the woollen fabrics which had been made artificially dear. This was the complaint of the manufacturers. The lowness of price of wool of which the growers complained was partly owing to the slackness of the demand for woollen goods just alluded to; partly to the much increased number of sheep in the country, and the greater weight of the fleece; and partly to the deterioration in the quality of the wool, which takes place when sheep are managed more with a view to their mutton than their fleece. Looking at these considerations, and remembering that the exportation of wool constantly declined during the five years of the high import-duty, it is clear that the English wool-grower owed no gratitude to Mr. Vansittart, and no grudge to Mr. Huskisson. The latter gentleman gave the following account, in February, 1826, of the result of his experiment, as far as concerned the export and import of wool:

'Instead of our manufactures being ruined—instead of the fulfilment of the assurances that all the British wool would be exported, to the utter destruction of our manufacturers, and that from their destruction the foreign wool would no longer be wanted in this country—what has been the real effect of this measure? Why, that since the removal of the restrictions on the export, we have sent abroad the amazing quantity of 100,000 lbs. weight of British wool; while, of foreign wool, we have imported no less a quantity than 40,000,000 lbs. weight. This, sir, is not speculation. It is practice and result against speculation. We removed the restrictive and prohibitory duties, and the consequences were, that we exported, comparatively, none of native growth, because we had a better market for it at home.' The price of wool continued so low, however, that two years after this a committee of the House of Lords was appointed to inquire into the causes. These have been evident in the course of our narrative; and it only remains to show what were the exports of manufactured woollens. In the five years of the heavy import-duty, the average annual shipments

amounted to 1,064,441 pieces. In the five years after the removal of the restrictions, the average annual shipment was 1,228,239 pieces; and in the next five years, the average rose to 1,505,993 pieces. It is alleged by the discontented that the value of our exports of woollens has not increased since the beginning of the century; and this is true. But it must be remembered how far the value sank, and had to rise again; and also that, owing to the lowered price of wool—the grower being compensated by his mutton—and the economical improvements in the manufacture, a much greater number of people are employed in the process, and accommodated with the produce, for the same money-value which was employed for a smaller number at the beginning of the century.

There was this year a reduction of the duties on coals and rum, and a repeal of the duties on law proceedings, and of various bounties which were useless, and therefore injurious. There was also a conversion of four per cent. stock into three and a half, which procured an annual saving to the country of £375,000. The effects of the peace upon the purse began to be tangible.

An important enactment of this session was one which established a uniformity of weights and measures. In pursuance of a recommendation of a commission appointed by the crown, weights and measures were settled by natural standards, while the old denominations were retained. This difficult subject, which much needed attention, had been taken in hand by six men of science, appointed as a commission in 1819, who issued a report in the same year. The Commons' committee on the subject, in 1821, considered their report; and two years after, a Bill for the regulation of Weights and Measures was brought in; but it was not carried till the next year. There was reason for these delays; important as it was, as a practical matter, affecting the interests of the whole of society, from the masters of science to the humblest purchaser at the village shop, that measurements and weights should be true and uniform. As was observed by Dr. Kelly, one of the witnesses before the committee: 'Nature seems to refuse invariable standards; for, as science advances, difficulties are found to multiply, or at

least, they become more perceptible, and some appear insuperable.' Till we know all about the level of the sea, and the effects upon the pendulum of every kind of attraction, with other particulars of natural knowledge which remain to be ascertained, we cannot have a perfect system of weights and measures. Meantime, scientific men are busy, all over the civilised world, in making researches; and governments must do the best they can in setting up improved standards in the footsteps of science, as was done in England by the establishment of the new imperial measures on the 1st of May, 1825. It is one of the beneficial results of peace, that the masters of science can, without impediment, unite in their processes of research, and compare results as they are obtained.

The session of 1824 closed, on the 25th of June, with a speech delivered by the king in person. It was a cheerful speech, free from all regretful allusions, except as to the disturbed state of Ireland, and declaratory of peace with the world abroad, and the advancing prosperity of every interest at home.

END OF VOL. I.

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